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John M. Costello;

OR

The Beauty of Virtue.







*John. D. Costello*







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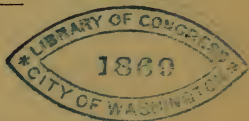
# The Beauty of Virtue,

Exemplified in an American Youth.

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"Thus his memory, like some holy light,  
Kept alive in our hearts, will improve them;  
For worth shall look fairer, and truth more bright,  
When we think how he lived but to love them.  
And as fresher flowers the sod perfume  
Where buried saints are lying,  
So our hearts shall borrow a sweet'ning bloom  
From the image he left there in dying."—MOORE.

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This Little Memoir

Is most Respectfully Dedicated to

His Grace,

The Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore,

And offered to a Disconsolate Mother, as a Token of Sympathy and  
Attachment to the Memory of her Son,

By the Author.



## Preface.



VER fertile in expedients for the present, ever provident for the future, when their sensual tastes and merely human inclinations are to be gratified, men gather and carefully preserve the perfumes of spring, that they may still enjoy their fragrance when that bright season will have passed away. Bringing into requisition even the light of the sun, they have learned, of late years, to produce and to secure permanently the image of whatever they admire and cherish: the beauties of nature, the curiosities of art, and the dear faces of friends; thus keeping them fresh and living to the view, de-

spite the ravages of time. Still more careful are they to write the lives of their heroes and favorites, that their characters and deeds may descend to posterity to be admired and imitated. Christian virtue has also its perfume, its beauty, its glory: a glory more splendid in the eyes of faith than all the glories of the world; a beauty before which all earthly beauty fades; a perfume that we should gather and carefully treasure up, lest "the children of this world" again appear "wiser in their generation than the children of light."\*

Such were the considerations which induced us to write the present biography. The reader must not expect to find here the imposing narrative of an extraordinary life: we propose simply to lay before him the virtues of a young man who passed seventeen

\* Luke, xvi, 8.



years of his short life in the peaceful seclusion of his home, and the remaining two and a half in the quiet routine of a college, and who, therefore, could have practised only what St. Francis of Sales calls "little virtues." But the Christian reader will bear in mind, that though these virtues are *little* in their exterior object, and appear insignificant in the eyes of men, they are *very great* in a moral or spiritual point of view, and most acceptable in the sight of God: that these "little virtues," in a word, make men eminently virtuous: *Minimum quidem minimum, sed in minimis fidelem esse maximum est.\** The God-Man himself does not appear to have practised any other sort of virtue, during the thirty years of his adorable life at Nazareth; and St.

\* *A little thing is indeed a little thing, but to be faithful in little things is a very great thing.*

Vincent Ferrer does not hesitate to say, that a religious who faithfully observes his rule is a *saint*, and may after his death be placed upon our altars. In applying these remarks to our young friend, we have no intention to pronounce a judgment which belongs to the Church alone; we cannot however refrain from saying here, what has often been affirmed by all who knew him, both at home and at the College, that though subjected to the restraint of rules in some degree austere, he always observed them with irreproachable fidelity, and that in a house where the practice of piety in an eminent degree is aimed at, he was looked upon as a model for the most perfect seminarians.


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## CHAPTER I.

### His Birth.

JOHN MICHAEL COSTELLO, the subject of this simple sketch, was born on the 4th of October, 1846, in Schenectady, a handsome and flourishing city, some fifteen miles from Albany, in the State of New York. His parents were natives of Ireland, and had descended from most respectable families. His father, Michael Costello, was born in Kilmore, in the County of Roscom-

mon. In his native land, he was conspicuous among all the youths of his neighborhood, for his amiability and other natural gifts, but far more for his earnest piety; and he has left behind him in the land of his adoption, a memory fresh in the hearts of all who knew him as he was, a man of the purest motives and of spotless integrity. At his death, his bereaved widow, seeking her consolation in the holy duties of a mother, devoted herself, as only a mother can, to the care of her son, supplying with tender solicitude his every want, and procuring for him the advantages of a solid christian and secular education. "A widow indeed," after the spirit of St. Paul, nothing could surpass the gentleness, kind-heartedness, and mater-



nal virtues of this truly admirable woman. May her declining years be soothed by the sweet consciousness of duty faithfully performed. Such were Costello's parents. His uncles, too, as if virtue were hereditary in the family, are held in high esteem for their worth as men and christians. His father's oldest brother, Patrick Costello, familiarly known among his friends as "St. Patrick," practises in the world all the piety and mortification of a religious.

We have entered into these details in order to acquaint the reader with the influences which surrounded our young friend at home, and which were the source of those gifts, natural and supernatural, that so adorned his soul. Virtuous parents are a treas-

ure beyond all price, one of those beautiful inventions of God's mercy for tempering the rigors of His justice. By a decree of that justice, the sin of our first father has been entail'd upon all his posterity as a curse and a germ of death; but, on the other hand, by an adorable effect of mercy, the virtues of good parents often pass to their children, as a blessing and a principle of predestination. This blessing, John Costello enjoyed. We have often heard it said by those who were best able to estimate the moral and religious dispositions of this excellent youth, that his home education had evidently been a perfect one, by which he imbibed, with his mother's milk, the good manners, amiability, faith and piety,

which distinguished him. Like the casket which retains for years the perfume it once enclosed, his life and manners were fragrant with the sweet odor of pure associations; and his character, like those flowers that borrow something of their own bright hues from the objects that surround them, reflected the loveliness of a virtuous home.

Our young friend came into the world on the day on which the Church honors the death, or rather, to use her own expressive language, the birth, *natalis*, of the meek and loving St. Francis, of Assisium. St. Francis was, therefore, always especially dear to him. Doubtless the gentle Saint deposited in his soul, that day, the seed of those virtues, the gift of both


nature and grace, that shone so brightly in his after life.

We are told that as the new-born babe lay slumbering sweetly in the nurse's arms, his father came into the room, with a small bible which he placed in the child's tiny hands; and when the nurse, smiling, asked him whether he intended to make a *Dominie* of his son so soon, he replied: "I shall be only too happy, if it be God's will to make a *Priest* of him."

This pious father took care to have him, early after his birth, admitted into the number of the children of God by the sacrament of regeneration.

## CHAPTER II.

### His Childhood.



WHEN his father died, Costello was but two years of age, too young as yet to realize the loss he had sustained. He had a younger brother, who was not long after laid in the church-yard beside his father, and John was then left alone with his widowed mother, the sole object of her care, the centre of all her hopes.

At the age of seven years, he made his first Confession, and between his eighth and ninth years, his first Com-

munion. On this latter occasion, he had, also, for the first time, the privilege of serving at Mass. His pastor must have observed in him, not only a sufficient knowledge of the truths of religion, but also a remarkable degree of piety to admit him at so early an age to the holy table, and in fact, we learn from his mother that, on a similar occasion, the good priest, struck by the boy's precocious piety and edifying demeanor at the altar, upon returning to the vestry at the close of the ceremony, embraced him tenderly and spoke in terms of admiration of his winning modesty and artless devotion.

At the age of twelve, John received the Sacrament of Confirmation, and an incident which occurred about



this time, proves sufficiently that this "grace of God was not void in him."\* Some Protestant boys, wishing to enjoy a laugh at his expense, began, one day, to ask him annoying questions about his religion, but he soon put a stop to their impertinence by saying that he knew, with certainty, that he was in the right path. "The last day," added he, "will decide who holds the truth, and who is in error, and I am sure that many will then deplore their blindness, when it will be too late."

The following details will serve to show the charitable dispositions of his heart. Every year, on the first of January, his mother was in the habit of distributing, among the poor chil-

\* I Cor., xv. 10.

dren of the neighborhood, little cakes of her own making. On these occasions it was truly charming to witness the delight of her young John, as he assisted in bestowing the "New Year's gifts." At times, there was something amusing in the earnestness and ingenuity with which he would plead the cause of the destitute, pressing his mother to give his old clothes to poor boys, and his school books to such as could not afford to purchase for themselves. He could never bear to see a needy person go from his mother's door without relief. One Sunday, as they were leaving the house on their way to Mass, they were approached by two little negro boys who begged for bread. Mrs. Costello hesitated at



first to reopen the door, but John would not consent to proceed until she had done so. "Mother," he then said, with a marked expression of joy, "how good that tastes to them. Are you not glad you went back to get it for them?"

Whenever there was to be a collection for the church, or for some charitable purpose, he was very anxious to know beforehand what his mother was disposed to give, to see whether it were enough. Sometimes to try him she would name an amount which she knew he would consider too small. Then it was interesting to hear how he would remonstrate with her, making use of all his eloquence to persuade her to be more liberal.

To these details, which we have gathered merely from Mrs. Costello's recollections, and which we could multiply to a much greater extent, we must add one more on account of its peculiar circumstances. One day, as they were in the burying-ground, working about the grave of John's father, trimming the shrubbery and planting flowers, Mrs. Costello requested a little boy standing by, to bring them some water from a place a short distance off, at the same time giving him something for his trouble. Not content with what his mother had given the lad for his service, John went himself to meet him at the gate of the cemetery, and gave him a few cents more. Seeing in his countenance the joy which this

good act caused him, his mother inquired what he had been doing.—“Why, mother,” said he, “I was giving something to that poor boy: don’t you think it will please him?”

Mrs. Costello assures us that she never detected him in a wilful untruth. If he sometimes gave excuses which were not perfectly correct, he could not rest, until he had explained every thing.

At an early age, John was sent to school. The following is his teacher’s testimony of his conduct as a school-boy: “As soon as I received him into the school, (he was then only eight years of age,) I was struck by his gentleness and by the modesty of his deportment, and at once formed a strong attachment to him. He


was always ahead of his class, whilst his obedience and docility were in marked contrast to the unruly and perverse spirit of most of his school-fellows. I never knew him to violate a single rule of the school. . . . .

When I came here, (1854,) the church had just been enlarged: the pastor wished me to get six or eight boys to attend at the altar. John Costello was the first that I selected. As there were many applicants, I established a rule, that any boy who would absent himself one Sunday, without sufficient reason, should forfeit his place in the sanctuary; and, although I frequently had occasion to apply this rule to others, it was useless as far as John was concerned: as well as I now recollect, he never

was a Sunday absent. The Christmas after I came here, the first Mass was at five o'clock. It was a bitter cold morning, with a deep snow on the ground; yet, intense as was the cold, my poor little child eight years old, was at his post; and when his mother was chid for bringing him out in such weather, she replied that she could not keep him in, so great was his fear of being 'put off the altar.' . . . I have had a pretty good opportunity of studying the character of children; but I have never met with a child so mature in thought and expression as our late and much lamented young friend."

### CHAPTER III.

#### First Signs of his Vocation.



THE following extract from his school master's account, acquaints us with the first signs of his vocation to a holier state of life. "I recollect that I once called him to me, and asked him, in jest, what pursuit he would like to adopt.

" 'Well, sir, I don't know.'

" 'Would you like to be a doctor?'

" 'No, sir.'



“ ‘ Would you like to be a machinist ? ’

“ ‘ No, sir.’

“ ‘ Would you like to be a boiler-maker ? ’

“ ‘ No, sir.’

“ ‘ What then would you like to be ? ’

“ ‘ I think,’ said he at last, ‘ I would like to be a *priest*. ’ ”

We learn from his mother that, even before his first Communion, he manifested the same inclination for the holy priesthood in his childish pastimes. Two boys of about his own age, belonging to a neighboring Protestant family, were his ordinary playmates. The three little fellows were constantly talking of the professions they intended to embrace. One was to be a farmer, the other

an engineer; but John would invariably say that he would be a priest. Then, to show them how he would act when a priest, he would pretend to be in church, imitating in his dress the sacred vestments, say Mass, with his little Protestant friends waiting on him, preach for them, and all this when he thought no one was observing him.

When he was about fourteen years of age, Mrs. Costello went one day to Albany, and took him with her to the Cathedral. It happened to be some particular occasion, when the Bishop was officiating in full pontificals. The splendor of the church and pomp of the ceremonies made so deep an impression upon John's mind, that, on his way back to Schenectady, he de-



clared to his mother, for the first time, that his desire was to become a priest, if she would give her consent.

As he grew up, the voice of God called him still more forcibly and plainly, and he would often urge upon his mother the necessity of his soon going to college. The priesthood became the dominant idea of his mind, the object of his most earnest longings and most fervent prayers. Far from throwing any obstacle in his way, his mother was rejoiced beyond measure at these signs of a religious vocation; and though he was her all, her stout Catholic heart did not hesitate to give him up to the service of God and of the Church.

At length, the time arrived for bringing the matter to an issue. His pastor offered to introduce him to the Bishop as a fit candidate for the sacred ministry. With this view, the good priest consented to go himself, with the boy and his mother, to Albany. This visit to the Bishop was a great event in John's life, and his little heart swelled with alternate hope and fear, in anticipation of the result. In his anxiety, however, he did not forget to have recourse to Heaven. The night before the important interview, he made an unre-served offering of himself to God, to be his faithful servant, and begged of the Blessed Virgin, with the most touching earnestness and simplicity, to aid him in his undertaking. The

next day, they were presented to the Bishop, who received them kindly, but gave them no encouragement; he told them that he would hold the matter under consideration, and that they might call again. On the way home, the poor boy's distress was painful to witness, so keen was his disappointment. His mother, seeing him so dejected, endeavored to console him, and bade him put all his trust in God. A month later, he called again on the Bishop, who then consented to receive him, and designated as the place of his studies, St. Charles' College, Maryland, observing at the same time that that Institution would be best adapted to his advancement in knowledge and virtue. We can better imagine than

describe the joy which he felt in having his cherished hopes so fully realized ; one thing is certain, there was no happier boy on earth that night than John Costello.

The Bishop had told him that there were then, in Green-Bush, two students of St. Charles', spending their vacation there; and he directed him to go and ascertain from them when they would return, that he might accompany them. He went accordingly, and having learned that the exercises of the College would be resumed on the first Tuesday of September, he resolved to go with the boys; and they promised to write to him ten days before starting, to give him time to prepare. The days rolled slowly by, too slowly for John's

ardor; he was impatient to be off and at work, and it seemed to him that the appointed time would never come. It came at last, but brought no letter from his companions. At length, the Saturday before the "first Tuesday of September" arrived, and still no letter. That Saturday, was a day of great excitement in Schenectady, the Filibusters or "Phunny Phellows" being out in procession. The streets were crowded; all classes and conditions of people were represented, rich and poor, old and young, grave and merry; and shouts of laughter greeted the paraders wherever they appeared. Poor John could take no part in the merriment. He returned from an unsuccessful visit to the post-office, much dispirited. "Mother,"

said he, "only that I don't want to ask you for another dollar, I would go down to Albany, and see what is the matter." The dollar was immediately handed him, and off he went full of joy. The Bishop had left for Europe, but had previously given his Secretary a letter recommending John to the Faculty of the College. Finding therefore, that the boys at Green-Bush, were by no means in a hurry to return, he determined to start alone. The following Monday found him on the road with a light heart, and with the prayers and blessings of many a sincere friend.

We cannot forbear mentioning, in this place, a little incident which admirably illustrates the simple good-heartedness of the boy. A poor old




man who had always manifested the greatest interest in John, saluted him as he was leaving home. John in his excitement, did not perceive him, and so did not return the kind farewell. When his attention was called to the fact, he was deeply mortified at the oversight. "The poor man may think," said he, "that I am ashamed to speak to him. I shall go back at once, and make up for my neglect."



## CHAPTER IV.

### First Year at St. Charles'.

 BEFORE following our young friend to college, it may be well to give the reader some idea of the institution to which he had been sent. St. Charles' College, in Howard County, Maryland, is situated on the Frederick turnpike, about five miles west of Ellicott city. It stands on an elevated and delightful site, enjoys a pure and salubrious atmosphere, and, save where the view is bounded by majestic forests, looks



out upon a beautifully diversified prospect of charming fields, rich meadow lands, gently sloping hills, and romantic valleys. The Institution has for its specific and only object, the education of such youths as manifest a desire to serve God in the sublime work of the priesthood. It was founded in 1831, by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who made a large donation to the Society of St. Sulpitius, with the proviso that it should be applied *exclusively* to the training of young ecclesiastics. Consequently, should a student, even of the most brilliant talents, renounce his intention to become a priest, the directors would be bound in conscience to dismiss him. This feature gives to St. Charles' much of the form

and character of a theological seminary. Hence, there is a greater strictness of rule than prevails in most literary institutions, a more generous spirit of obedience and self-control being required in ecclesiastical students than in young men of the world. For this reason also, more time is given to religious exercises, and greater care taken to develop and foster habits of piety, advancement in virtue being esteemed at St. Charles' more highly even than the acquirement of learning. To this end the daily rule sets apart certain hours for meditation, for assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, for the particular examen of conscience, for the Rosary, spiritual reading, and visiting the Blessed Sacrament, thus

furnishing the young Levites with every facility for becoming holy and useful priests.

Thanks to the special favor of God and to the wisdom of the rules, the spirit of the community, upon the whole, has always been such as to afford the directors great consolation and encouragement; but at no time in its history have the prospects of St. Charles' been more flattering than at the writing of these pages, as well with respect to the numerical increase of the students, as to their admirable regularity and fervor. Still, it must be admitted that here, as in every institution of the kind, not all are equally faithful to the grace of their vocation. Some are occasionally met with, who either sadly misapprehend

or recklessly disregard the object for which they entered the house. Such persons are patiently borne with, as long as there is any hope of amendment; they are requested to withdraw as soon as found hurtful to the community. In spite, however, of the zeal and vigilance of devoted Superiors, the influence of disorderly students has sometimes produced the most lamentable effects, irregularity, insubordination, tepidity, discontent, and finally, loss of vocation. Yes, even at St. Charles', bad company has more than once frustrated the designs of grace and darkened the hopes of a cheering future. Bad company is the rock upon which pure young hearts, full-freighted with generous and holy purposes, have sometimes

struck and made miserable shipwreck. This peril awaited Costello at the very threshold of his new career.

As we have seen, he had determined, in his ardor, to set out before his expected companions; and, although he had never before been any great distance from home, he started alone on this long journey, Sept. 7th, 1863. At Albany, however, he met another student of St. Charles', who was returning to the College, after his first vacation. Both were of the same age, both of the same lively and amiable disposition, and they soon became fast friends. Under the guidance of his companion, John arrived safely, and was not long in becoming acquainted with the house and its in-

mates. Unfortunately, his new friend whose conduct during the first year had evinced the best disposition, now gave evidence of having imbibed the spirit of the world. He had become volatile and unruly, and gave his associate a very dangerous example of levity and disobedience. This friendship would doubtless have proved the ruin of both; but a professor, who had noticed Costello's good dispositions, saw the bad influence bearing upon him, and warning him of his danger, gradually withdrew him from the pernicious association. Costello was saved; but his unfortunate friend more and more disgusted with so quiet and retired a life, shortly after left the College, giving up at the same time all idea of the ecclesiasti-



cal state. The fate of his first friend was a salutary lesson for John, and it was not unheeded; it taught him that the only means for preserving his vocation were faithfulness to duty even in the smallest matters, and above all a ready and exact obedience to the rule.

A community life is marked by very few noteworthy incidents; indeed, nothing can be more uniform and monotonous. Hence, we have few reminiscences of Costello's first year at college; and, moreover, we have been deprived, by his own act, of the letters which he wrote that year. His mother had carefully preserved them, but it appears that, during the ensuing vacation, John burnt them all, telling his mother that she would

always have a plenty of new letters from him, without keeping the old ones. We have, however, discovered two of his writings with the date of that year; a short letter to his pastor, and the beginning of a diary, such as students are wont to keep. The diary begins with his Spiritual Retreat, which took place during the first days of October. The retreat, held usually at this season of the scholastic year, presents to the youthful student, after a short experience of college life, an excellent opportunity of renewing his good dispositions, and of adopting means of perseverance, amid the temptations to coldness and disgust that will assail him. In this, his first retreat, Costello resolved, he tells us, especially



“to observe all the rules of the community, and with this view, to select as his friends only the most regular students, and in all things to take the advice of his spiritual director, whom he considered as his best friend.”—How faithfully he kept these resolutions, the sequel of this narrative will show.

We also learn from his diary that he had been deeply impressed, during his Retreat, with the Life of St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, by Montalembert. The innocence, piety and simplicity of that holy life, left an indelible impression on his mind: he had never read, he used to say, so charming a book. From that time, the lives of the Saints became his favorite reading. Once, on a recrea-

tion day, his director lent him a story-book which many others had found very entertaining: John commenced it; but, after reading a few pages, he brought it back: "I used to like such books," said he, "but now I don't care for them. . . . Give me the Life of a Saint."

2 We may readily imagine that our young friend's college life was in every respect one of perfect contentment. With his pious dispositions it could not well be otherwise, in a house where every thing tends to nourish the spirit of devotion. We are naturally happy wherever the surroundings are in harmony with our feelings and inclinations. In a letter to his pastor, November 14, 1863, Costello wrote thus: . . . "I

like the place very much indeed, I could not be better pleased. Give my respects and love to my mother, and tell her that I am perfectly contented with my situation." . . .

The following spring, an incident occurred which displays at once his zeal for religion and his readiness to oblige. One of the college servants, whose duty it was to prepare the altar-bread, was taken sick, and as no one else could conveniently attend to that office, the professor who had charge of the sacristy undertook it himself. Having heard that Costello had sometimes assisted in that work of piety when at home, he requested his aid in the present emergency. The good youth was delighted and readily entered upon the task. But


the performance of it involved a considerable sacrifice: it was necessary to give up a part of his recreation time, and John was as fond of sport as any lad in the house. No matter, here was an opportunity for self-denial that must not be lost; besides, he was in the company of a priest, working for the altar, and that was a sufficient recompense for any privation he could impose on himself. Every two weeks, an entire afternoon was devoted to this pious occupation, and even after his return to college at the end of vacation, he continued the work with the same spirit of zeal and disinterestedness that he had manifested in undertaking it. His conduct, in this employment, was closely scrutinized; but

'the most careful observer could never discover in it the slightest indication of weariness or disgust. Prompt, exact and cheerful, in this as in every thing else, he gave a beautiful example of that singleness of motive which places the adorable will of God above every natural inclination or desire.



## CHAPTER V.

### His First Vacation.



THE year passed quickly away; vacation time arrived, and Costello was to make the first trial of his virtue as an ecclesiastic. This is always a time of great peril for the young student after a year of seclusion and restraint; and there is perhaps, no severer test of his good dispositions than the first vacation. The first vacation well spent may be looked upon as an assurance of fidelity in those that are to come,



## FIRST VACATION.

and as an earnest of final perseverance. John at length bade adieu to the associations which he had known but for a single short year, but which had nevertheless become endeared to him by a thousand ties of love, of devotion and of duty. Some little rules were given him, as well to guard him against the dangers of the world, as to test his fidelity when left entirely to his own direction. Would he prove faithful to the grades of his community life, or would he, when withdrawn from the influence of the incentives and helps to virtue that surrounded him at college, grow remiss and fall away, as so many had done, who had given as bright promise as he? The sequel will show.



Let us first open a letter, which he wrote to his spiritual director, shortly after reaching home. He accuses himself of "neglect," with a simplicity and humility truly touching. He had taken the resolution of spending a part of each day in study, and especially in reviewing his studies of the past year; but the visits he was required to make amongst his friends and relatives, rendered it almost impossible for him to comply with that resolution.

"August 6, 1864. . . . You see, Dear Father, how I have spent my vacation so far, and the cause of my neglect. I have studied nothing of any account, since I came home. In order, however, to make up for the time I have lost, I propose to study

two hours every day ; and if you are not satisfied with that, impose a more severe penance on me. . . . I have been twice to Confession and Communion, and with the help of God, I will go again to Confession next Saturday night. As I am at my aunt's, in the country, I cannot assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every morning : so, my dear Father, I shall esteem it a great favor, if you will remember me at the altar every day. I must also tell you another thing : I have lost my office-book, and have written to Mr. O'S. to send me another one. Meanwhile, I am reciting the Office of the Blessed Virgin in English ; but it is much shorter than the Latin one. The Office I mean, is to be found in the " Key of Heaven ; " I recite it

once in the morning, and once in the afternoon. . . . I went to Albany for a week, and was introduced to several Sisters of Charity, who by their conversation and manners pleased and edified me greatly. I also served one of the Masses of their Retreat, last Sunday, and received the holy Communion with them. . . .”

It will be interesting to compare this letter with one which was written us by a pious and intelligent friend of Costello, and which contains some very edifying details touching his trip to Albany. We shall see what he meant by his “neglect.”

“During the July of 1864, I met a friend in the streets of Albany; after the usual salutation, he said to me: ‘Frank, I have seen St.

Aloysius to-day.' 'Indeed?' said I; 'have you been in heaven?' 'No, not quite,' said he, 'but a heavenly being has appeared upon earth.' He then spoke to me of John Costello, and told me where he had seen him. John was at that time spending a few days at a friend's. Having been previously invited, I called to see this friend, and was introduced to his young guest. I was perfectly overcome by his manner and appearance: so holy, so full of joy and heavenly peace was his countenance. Oh God! for a return of that happy day! for a repetition of the holy moments spent in the company of that innocent soul.

"I met him on several occasions after that time, and at length prevailed on him to stay a few days at

my house. I have been intimate with priests, brothers and sisters of various orders in religion; but I must say that I have never known in any one, dispositions so pure, so elevated above the earth as those I found in him.

“During the few days he spent with me, the Sisters of Charity of this city were engaged in a spiritual retreat, under the direction of a holy priest of the Lazarist order.\* I, being invited to serve Mass, took Costello with me one morning; and, after much pleading, succeeded in inducing him to serve in my stead. If his holiness ever shone brightly, it was during this ceremony: his face

\*The Rev. Clergyman here alluded to was the President of an Ecclesiastical College, and the writer of these lines a student of the same.

was so calm, so sweet, so angelic! After his thanksgiving, the priest said to me: 'My son, who was the little *seraph* that served my Mass this morning? I never celebrated with so much satisfaction.' In answer, I called John and introduced him to the Father, who, after conversing with him for some time, at length proposed to him to go and live with him, at the same time holding out the most flattering inducements, etc. But all to no purpose; John refused every offer made to him, saying that he liked St. Charles' too well.

"A few days later, he returned to his home in Schenectady. Shortly after his departure, I determined to avail myself of a long-standing invi-



tation, to spend a week or two in the country; and, as I earnestly desired the pleasure of John's society, I resolved, if he would consent, to take him with me. He yielded to my request, and we started on the 8th of August. We remained with my country friends five days, and I think they were the happiest days in my life. I cannot forbear relating a few incidents which occurred during that time.

“In the first is displayed Costello's firm, unflinching faith in the teachings of the church, and his courage in professing it. The friends, whom we were visiting, were very staunch Presbyterians; and, one day, while John and I were walking in the woods, in company with a young man named Edward, the son of our



host, the following conversation ensued :

“*Edward.* ‘Do you intend following any particular profession, Mr. Costello?’

“*John.* ‘Oh, yes. I intend to study for the Church.’

“*Edward.* ‘For what Church?’

“‘For the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of God,’ said John, with emphasis on every word.

“Edward looked at him with surprise for some time, and then said in a decisive tone: ‘You only *think* that to be the Church of God.’

“‘*Think!*’ said John, ‘no, but I am sure of it. As surely as God made the earth on which we are standing, just as sure is it, that the Catholic Church is the Church of God.’

“Then followed a short argument, during which Edward said: ‘Why didn’t you eat the turkey we had for dinner to-day? Why, none of you would touch it as though you thought it poisonous. I would like to see myself eat fish when I could get turkey!’

“‘Oh!’ replied John, smiling, ‘I did not think the meat in any way unfit for me, but you know, Edward, Catholics never eat meat on Friday.’

“‘Why so?’ asked Edward, ‘I suppose the old priest would make you jump, if you told him you did such a thing, wouldn’t he?’

“To this, John answered by a loud peal of laughter, which even Edward could not refrain from joining in.—John, then, gave him a short expla-

nation in the kindest and friendliest terms, and we returned to the house.

“ We passed the day in the most agreeable manner, conversing pleasantly until tea time. During this meal, the father of the family, who was a stern, but pious old gentleman, would, every now and then, fix his eyes upon John with intense curiosity and apparent pleasure; but he uttered not a word. Tea over, we all arose from the table, the old gentleman alone keeping his seat. John had left the room, and I was about to follow him, when, suddenly the old man arose, and said to his wife: ‘ Eliza, that boy is a *holy child*, the Lord tells me so. I see something more than earthly in his countenance.’ Yes, he had truly seen a disposition which

only a saint can possess, a brightness of character which only Heaven can bestow, and that on its most special favorites. The Lord had truly shown the old man this, for he hated the boy's religion too much to bear testimony to its effects in so open a manner, if God had not constrained him so to do.

“Another little incident, which I may mention here, occurred in this city. While on a walk, one day, we met with some other students who joined us. The day being very warm all stopped at a fountain to drink. The others having slaked their thirst, started on slowly; and after some little discussion between John and myself, as to which of us should drink last, the dear child served me, and

was about to drink himself, when three or four ragged little *urchins* came along, and in the rudest manner demanded the cup. I objected to their getting it, and rebuked them for their impudence; but John said to me: 'Frank, let them have it; perhaps they are more worthy of it than I. . . . Do now, if you are my friend, do me this favor.' With reluctance I acceded to his request; and, forthwith, he began to pump water for the crowd. But the boys were so moved by his act, that they refused to drink, until he had done so himself.

"During the time he spent with me, he was particularly attentive to the recitation of his Little Office and Beads. How attractive soever our

entertainments might be, John always withdrew at fixed hours to attend to his exercises of devotion. In company he was uniformly reserved, and always careful lest he should either say too much or give offence; often, when I knew he had reason to complain, I found him silent. Personally I dearly loved him, and revered him as a *saint*. All considered, he was too good for this life, and though I mourn our separation on earth, I hope to meet him, one day, never again to part."

This beautiful letter needs no comment: the facts themselves show us what an impression Costello's life and deportment made, not only on an intimate friend, but on other students, on priests, nay more, on bitter Pro-



testants and rough vagabonds. We venture to say that the picture here drawn, is by no means too highly colored: it is a heartfelt expression of what we, like all who knew him, have ever felt and admired.

The priest who had charge of the sacristy at St. Charles', having experienced John's piety, docility and skill, whilst assisting in the preparation of the altar-bread, as above mentioned, was convinced that, notwithstanding his age, no one among the students was better qualified than he to be assistant sacristan for the next scholastic year. He accordingly wrote to his young Levite, intimating his intention of appointing him to that office, which is the noblest and most highly esteemed at the College. John



was delighted at the anticipation ; though believing himself quite unworthy of so great an honor, he hoped that it would conduce to his greater spiritual good, and obtain him admission into the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, from which his age alone excluded him. The following was his answer :

“SCHENECTADY, Aug. 18, 1864.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR:—I received your kind and welcome letter on the 15th inst., I was delighted when I saw that you thought you would be able to have me, your unworthy ‘dear boy,’ as one of your sacristans next year. I think it will help me to enter the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, don’t you think so too? My mother says you favor me very much.

•

Yes, I know you favor me too much. So I must, and I will, with the help of God, be a *good boy*. . . . I received the meditation book you sent me. I have made my meditation from it every morning since, except two, when I was in the city and the book in the country. My meditations are not very long, for, if I remain long and think a great deal on one thing, I get distracted. I also fail to remember my resolutions as often as I ought during the day. . . .

“I remain, as ever,

“Your affectionate son in Christ,

“JOHN M. COSTELLO.

“P. S.—I will leave for College on the 1st of September, in order to fill my expected post; and, if you think that is not soon enough, I will come earlier.”

## CHAPTER VI.

### Second Year at College.



ACCORDING to his promise, Costello left home "on the first day of September," that is, four or five days before the time appointed for the students to return. In New York, he met with another student of St. Charles', anxious, like himself, to return early to college, and who, from this time, became, not only his most intimate, but his most pious and useful friend. As they were both equally fervent in piety,

and regular in their conduct, and both equally desirous of advancing in virtue, it was agreed, upon John's suggestion, that each should act as monitor to the other. Every two or three weeks, the office was faithfully attended to, each admonishing the other of all his exterior faults and defects. It was, moreover, agreed that they should daily recite for each other, one "Hail Mary," by way of compensation for that work of fraternal charity. This laudable friendship took its origin mainly in the following circumstance:

As they were travelling at a very rapid rate on the Philadelphia and Baltimore railroad, the cars ran off the track, and were completely overturned. Quite a number of persons

were seriously injured, but our two friends escaped unhurt. At the time of the accident, Costello was engaged at his Beads; and shortly after, when the excitement had in some measure subsided, he handed his companion a book that he might recite the "Te Deum," as he had himself already done, in thanksgiving to Almighty God, for having preserved them unharmed. But he by no means confined himself to prayer; his tender charity was moved at the distress and suffering produced by the accident, and he looked around for some object upon which to satisfy the desires of his compassionate heart. Not far off, upon the ground, sat a poor woman vainly endeavoring to hush the sobbings of a young and fretful babe; the mother's solicitude struggled, as

might be seen in her pale and sad countenance, with the keenest physical suffering; one of her hands having been so wounded and bruised as to render it almost useless. With words of sympathy and comfort, this youthful follower of "Jesus most merciful," dressed the lacerated hand of the poor mother, and then taking the wailing little one into his own arms, soon lulled it into a tranquil slumber. Nor did this content the ardor of that generous soul; he emptied his purse of all the money it contained, and even borrowed some of his friend to help the unfortunate woman on her way. Truly, the spirit of that youth was an apostolic spirit, the spirit that desires "to spend and to be spent" for the love of Christ's suffering members.



It will perhaps be better to let him relate his own history during this his second year of college life. For this purpose, we will take a few extracts from his letters to his mother. The first we have, is dated "St. Charles' College, September 26, 1864. . . . . Almighty God, as I told you before, saved me from the terrible accident that happened to us in the cars.— Praise be to his holy name! . . . . . Our Retreat will commence next week, if nothing happens, and I intend, with the help of God, to make a good one. I am now a sacristan, and have consequently the privilege of touching the sacred vessels and linens; I am in hopes that I shall soon become a member of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin. Pray for me, Dear Mother,



and tell my friends also to do so, that I may succeed, and be a *good boy*. Be not uneasy about me, for you know where I am, and what I am studying for. . . . .”

The rule of the College allowed him to write to his mother once a month, and in general he was eager to avail himself of the permission. Once, however, he was behind time, and Mrs. Costello became alarmed at his delay. His next letter bears the following date: .“St. Charles’, November 6, 1864. . . . . You know, Dear Mother, that I am a sacristan this year, and, on that account, I have not quite so much time to write as I had before. Last week, for instance, we had two Feasts, one of which was St. Charles’ day; the

Archbishop of Baltimore was here to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation, and we were obliged to make some extra preparations for the occasion. So, my dear Mother, I beg of you to excuse my long delay, and not permit yourself to become uneasy about me, for I am contented and very happy. The more I see of my college life, the more I am charmed with it. I lately heard read in the refectory, the Life of John Mary Décalogne, a pious student of Paris: it pleased me very much. I have read also the Life of St. Stanislaus, who was likewise a student. Oh! that I could be as good as he was! My dear Mother, pray for me, that I may become a *good boy*. . . . As winter is coming on, it is getting

colder; and as I have no overcoat, I shall feel it. But I am afraid I ask too much of you."

"St. Charles' College, Dec. 6, 1864.

"My very dear Mother, I have received your affectionate letter, and also your fine presents. I am very much pleased with them: the coat fits me very nicely. . . . I see there is no one like a mother; for, I must say, my dear Mother, that I never asked you for any thing without receiving it, if it were for my good. Accept my sincere thanks for the many favors you have bestowed on me. . . ." We do not hesitate to record these sentiments as exhibiting a model of filial gratitude. The following letter expresses no less admirably his faith and piety.

“St. Charles’ College, Dec. 21, 1864. It is with sorrow I tell you that, on last Saturday morning, we buried one of our best fellow-students. He had come from France, four or five years ago, to become a priest in America. He had left his home and friends, and given up every thing for this purpose, and for the greater glory of God. Now, I hope, he is enjoying his reward. . . . Christmas is near at hand, a time of joy and glee for all. So, my dear Mother, do not grieve for my absence from home; but rejoice rather, and thank God for the numberless graces he has bestowed upon us. Remember me in your Christmas Communion, as I will remember you in mine. This picture I send you as a little Christ-

mas remembrance; do not forget to send me your photograph as you promised to do about this time. . . .”

After Christmas, we find him describing, with evident pleasure, the ceremonies and decorations of the church, and especially congratulating himself upon having “heard five Masses that day, three of which he himself had served.” Then again, he gratefully and touchingly thanks his mother, who had sent him some money as a Christmas gift, and assures her “it is just as acceptable, as if it had been *a hundred dollars*. I remember well,” he adds, “what you used to do when I was at home. Whenever you got any thing nice, you would save it for me. All those things I shall never forget. My dear

Mother, I think you wrong yourself to accommodate me: do so no more."

Another feature of Costello's letters is the care he took to send kind messages and greetings to his many friends; almost every letter contained a lengthy enumeration of the persons to whom he wished to be specially remembered, assuring them of his prayers and begging theirs in return. His whole correspondence, in fact, gives evidence of the interest he had excited in the hearts of a host of friends.

During the Christmas holidays, he took a slight cold which lasted for some time, showing by its tenacity that his lungs were very delicate, and required great care. In this connection the following letter was



written to his mother: "St. Charles' College, Jan. 19, 1865. — My very dear Mother, I feel sorry to think that your fears have been so much excited for me, for I am now better of my cold. It was not very serious; but Rev. Mr. R. was afraid it would become so, if I did not take precautions. Indeed Rev. Mr. R. acted as a true *father* to me: he did every thing in his power for me; one day, he gave me a good scolding for not taking the precautions he had told me to observe. I ought to be very thankful to him, for I think it was through his cares that I was cured. He is very much obliged to you for remembering him in your good prayers; he also prays for you. . . . We are preparing for our examination; I



## SECOND YEAR

want you and all my friends to pray for me, particularly on the first Monday of February, for I shall be examined on that day; and I know I shall succeed if you all pray for me. . . .”

He did succeed and very well too; but there was another thing far more grateful to him, and one which, he well knew, would afford his mother much greater pleasure than his success in study. It was customary in the College to read in public at the beginning of each month a report of the success of the students in their classes during the preceding month; and the Faculty of the College had determined that henceforward a similar report should be made of their conduct. This measure was carried into immediate effect, and John thus men-

tions it in a letter dated "Febr. 12, 1865. . . . When the report of good conduct was read out, I was found among those who had the highest note, that is, *five*. So you see, my dear Mother, you must continue praying for me, that I may keep up, and always deserve *five*." We read in the same letter: "I did not forget the anniversary of my father's death: I had him prayed for in several Masses. May the Lord be merciful to his soul."

The reader may well wonder that so excellent a young man was not yet a member of the Sodality. If such was the case, it was not attributable to a want of merit or desire on his part. In these respects he was all that could be wished. But he was

yet very young, and it was customary in the College not to admit the younger students into that pious association, until they had proved by a long trial their ability to persevere and their intention of doing so. John was advised not to apply for admission the first year. In the beginning of the second, he was placed on the list of *aspirants*; but, owing to circumstances quite beyond his control, he was not permitted to make his solemn consecration to the Blessed Virgin until about Easter. The following is an extract from a letter of his written at that time: "St. Charles' College, March 29, 1865. . . . I am truly happy to announce to you, dear Mother, that I was received into the Sodality of Our Lady of Angels, on

last Saturday, which was the feast of the Annunciation." From his admission into the Sodality, he entered as it were upon a new life. To become a worthy child of Mary was the motive of all his actions; he would often speak of her with his friends, calling her with childlike simplicity and affection, "*ma chère Mère*;"\* and according to the testimony of the prefect of the Sodality, "from the day of his reception till that of his death, he was one of our most fervent sodalists."

The next thing we find in his letters, is a request to his mother to pray for his spiritual director who had been taken sick. "St. Charles',

\*"My dear Mother," an expression taken from a French hymn which the students were accustomed to sing during the month of May.

April 11, 1865. . . . Father R. has been sick and confined to his bed for a week. We prayed for him, last Saturday, in the Sodality; and, since then, he says he is much better. But he is still very weak; pray for him." As we have remarked in a foregoing chapter, John, from the beginning of his college life, had chosen his director for his best and dearest friend; and one of his most pious companions says on this subject: "His devoted attachment to his confessor was shown on every occasion, but especially at the time of Fr. R.'s sickness. A constant attendance on him, anxiety for his recovery, fervent prayers for this object, all served to show John's deeply rooted love for him, whom God had appointed to be his spiritual

guide here on earth. I remember that, one day, being obliged to leave his bedside to fulfil some other duty, he came to me, and, after representing his grief and anxiety, entreated me to take his place till his return: ‘You know,’ said he, ‘how wearisome it is for us, to be long alone when we are sick. I shall be so glad if you will go and stay with Father R. until I return.’ He also requested others to visit the father, and afford him consolation.” It is the custom at St. Charles’ to address the reverend gentlemen by the simple title of “Mr.,” John seemed to regard this mode of address as wanting in due respect and affection, and, therefore, made it a point in speaking to his director always to call him “Father,” a title



he earnestly desired to have adopted for all his professors. Indeed, he entered into an agreement to that effect with one of his friends; but finding the idea impracticable, he readily submitted to the custom of the house.

He had long cherished a wish for his mother's likeness, and had frequently urged her to send it to him. To his unbounded delight, the picture at length came, and called forth in return the following letter: "St. Charles' College, April 26, 1865. My very dear Mother, I received, with great pleasure, your letter and your picture. At first, I thought the likeness was not a good one; but the more I look at it, the more I find it resembles you. I keep it in my desk in the study room, so that, whenever I



raise the lid, I may see you and offer up a little prayer for you. So, when you look at my picture, do the same for me. . . .”

The year passed on, and at length came May, the bright “morn of blossoms,” the beautiful threshold of summer, the month of joy and gladness, of reviving hopes and fresh resolves, the month above all that Catholic piety has selected, as fittest to be consecrated to the honor of the Immaculate Queen of heaven, most suggestive of the beauty of her holiness and purity. The month of Mary! redolent of perfume, radiant with sunshine and the bright hues of flowers, glad with the music of rushing streams, rustling leaves and singing birds, filled with light and life

and beauty ; beautiful everywhere, but nowhere more so than amid the green hills and waving woods that surround St. Charles'. In a letter written at this time to a beloved aunt, Costello thus expresses the sentiments of his heart : " St. Charles', May 3, 1865. . . . . We are now in the most beautiful season of the year ; every thing around us is budding and growing anew ; should not we, then, begin to serve God with new zeal ? Oh ! what a delightful time we have, now, down here ! You cannot imagine it. In front of the College stands an oratory of the Blessed Virgin, which we illuminate during the recreation after supper ; and, there, we sing hymns in our dear Mother's honor. At the close of the evening prayer, we repair

in silence to the chapel; here, before our Lady's altar, which is adorned with more than ordinary care, a meditation is read and some beautiful hymns sung; the exercises are concluded with an act of Consecration to Mary recited by the President in the name of the community. The care of this altar has been entrusted to me; you must pray that I may always dress it so well as to merit the blessing of our holy Mother on my desire to become a good and useful priest. The beads that I send you were chained by myself, and are enriched with the Pope's indulgences; they will cost no more than the recitation of a *decade* for your unworthy nephew."

This month of May was the happiest period of Costello's life. Every day the little altar was decorated with a care and taste until then scarcely conceived of in the College; no pains were spared, no labor considered too great by this devoted child of Mary. He was as ingenious in contriving, as he was skilful and earnest in executing new modes of ornamenting the shrine of his beloved Mother. Each evening the community was called upon to admire the fruits of his pious labors, in the exquisite effects produced by his beautiful and varied combinations of the lights and flowers. At one time it would be a crown; at another a cross; then, we had the monograms of Jesus and Mary, or a representation of the Sa-

cred Hearts. This work engrossed our student's whole soul, and filled up his every leisure moment, for he yielded only to the call of imperative duty. "There was not one," writes a student of that year, "that was not forced to admire the rare taste displayed in these decorations, and the unreserved affection that prompted so generous a sacrifice of time and repose."

His love for his "Mother in heaven," by no means lessened his love for his "mother on earth." Vacation again drew near, and he rejoiced at the prospect of a speedy reunion with her. This joy was augmented on hearing that the Sisters of Charity, whose "edifying conversation" had so charmed him at Albany, had just

established themselves in his native city. His love for his mother and his admiration of these pious religious were sources of the most delightful anticipation to him. Hence the following lines: "June 23, 1865. . . . I am very glad to hear that we have Sisters in Schenectady; no doubt, they will do a great deal of good there. I shall be greatly pleased to see them when I come home. . . . One of our youngest students was called home, the day before yesterday, on account of his mother's death; pray for her and for him. I hope, dear Mother, that the Lord will spare you to me, and me to you, and bring me back home to you in safety."

Thus passed Costello's second year at College. To have an adequate idea



of the holy beauty that shone in that pure young life during that period, it would be necessary to add much that we prefer reserving for a subsequent chapter. So far, we have seen him in his letters only; but we know him too well: we know too well how humble was his estimate of himself, how far he was from suspecting his own virtues, to harbor, even for an instant, the thought that they were written through a love of display. No, they are the artless outpourings of his heart into the heart of his mother, the unaffected expression of his native candor and benevolence, of his spirit of faith and piety, and of his earnest desire to advance in virtue.



## CHAPTER VII.

### His Second Vacation.



WE wish that we could here introduce some letters that he wrote from home to his spiritual director, during his second vacation; but we may not do so: they are of too sacred a nature to be opened to the eye of the public. In these, as in those of his former vacation, he accuses himself of “neglect,” carefully avoiding any kind of excuse, entering into the minutest details about his Communions, Confessions and other

exercises of piety, and begging of his director advice and encouragement to be better. "Write as soon as possible, my very dear Father," he adds in a postscript, "for your last letter did me much good, as much, almost, as if I had been to your room for advice. Pray for me, and forgive me; I will do much better for the future."

The following was one of the faults which he deplored most bitterly.—One day, he had accompanied a few friends of his to Troy, a city near Albany; and having been detained there longer than he expected, he missed the cars, and was thus prevented from returning home on the same day, according to his mother's express injunction. The next morning, meeting with rather a cool reception, he

begged her pardon in the most humble terms, and declared, what his companions had noticed with admiration, that, during the whole night, he had been in the greatest anguish, knowing the anxiety she would experience at his not arriving. "I had no business to go to Troy," he wrote to his director, "I will do so no more."

His school-master relates some very edifying incidents connected with this vacation, the merit of which John's humility made him entirely ignore. "During the vacation of 1865, our dear boy edified us constantly, by the exactness with which he discharged his duties, and by his unswerving fidelity to the instructions he had received at College. He habitually kept

his mother's company, saying that 'Father R.' had told him to spend the greater part of his time with her. When he was spending an evening out with any of his friends, at nine o'clock he would arise and beg to be excused; nor could any representations induce him to prolong his stay beyond that hour. If any one said it was too early, his reply was: 'Father R. would have me retire at nine o'clock.' 'But Father R. will not know anything about it.' 'Yes,' was his answer, 'for I should tell him.'"

What a degree of self-renunciation had that chosen youth attained, who could thus firmly overcome the inclinations of nature by sacrificing the pleasant things of life? We see a boy naturally vivacious, ardent, en-

thusiastic, idolized by a circle of devoted friends, fond of agreeable intercourse, a lover of whatever is gay and cheering, calmly withdrawing himself from the society of congenial companions, at an hour when the tide of social enjoyment is only beginning to rise, and that from a simple motive of faith, untainted by the slightest admixture of vanity. John Costello had learned the secret of the Saints ; he knew how to be faithful in little things, a virtue that lies at the root of all success in the spiritual life, and without which all our efforts to live conformably to our vocation must result in so many mortifying failures. The practice of it involves much that is painful to nature ; but it is in this precisely that consists its wonderful

efficacy. There can be nothing more opposed to a life of tepidity, most dangerous of the pitfalls that beset the road to heaven, than the quiet and constant curbing of our natural activity. It is an indispensable sign of election, the cross which our Lord most desires us to embrace.

Costello's horror of personal vanity occasioned the following incident.—“His mother was one day combing his hair, as she was about parting it, he stopped her with: ‘Mother, don’t, Father R. never parts his.’ ‘Leave it to me, my son,’ she replied, ‘it looks better so.’ To please her, he suffered her to arrange it as she would; but as soon as she had retired, he slyly passed his fingers through it.”



The following anecdote, for which we are indebted to the same source, portrays the delicacy of his conscience. "One day, whilst paying a visit to a friend, the weather being excessively warm, he called for a drink, and the servant prepared some wine and water. He asked her if the mistress knew any thing of it; she replied that it made no difference, that the wine was for family use. But all her protestations were of no avail with the conscientious lad; he could not be prevailed on to taste it, so long as the mistress knew nothing of it."

"His piety," several of his friends testify, "was so remarkable, as to attract the attention of even the most unobservant. Every week, he



went to Confession and Communion. Every day, except during a short visit to the country, he attended Mass, visited the Blessed Sacrament, and recited the Rosary and the Office of the Blessed Virgin."

The members of the Sodality enjoyed the privilege, at St. Charles', of wearing the cassock on Sundays, and even constantly if their directors considered it advisable. Having first obtained this permission, Costello procured a cassock and surplice; and every Sunday of his stay at home, he appeared in the Sanctuary of his parish church, to the great edification of both priest and people, assisting at the High Mass, Vespers and other Offices with a modesty and gravity equalled only by the fervor of his piety. The Cath-

olics of Schenectady regarded him with manifest complacency: indeed, they might well feel proud of the saintly boy, in whom the marks of a divine vocation were so unmistakably witnessed. One of them remarks: "He was beloved and admired by all who knew him; nor were these the sentiments of Catholics only; he was spoken of with as much warmth and affection by persons of other denominations, as by those of his own. I regard him as a *perfect model* of a christian youth."

But Schenectady was no longer to enjoy his presence and good example. During this vacation, his mother resolved to remove to Maryland, in order to be near her son during the course of his studies. John had al-

ready provided her a situation which accorded perfectly with her piety. A young priest, who had been his professor at the College, had lately been appointed pastor at Rockville, Montgomery county, Md. A house-keeper was needed, and John proposed his mother. The offer being readily accepted, Mrs. Costello left Schenectady, and, in the beginning of August, arrived with her son at the new pastor's residence. "My mother has left all her friends to be near me," wrote John to his director, "she is keeping house for Father C., who received her very kindly indeed. I hope she will like her new position."

He himself was charmed with it. To live in quiet retirement with his "dear mother," in daily association

with the minister of religion, within the shadow of the church, of which he was the sacristan, was for him the ideal of earthly happiness ; it seemed to him as though he were already a priest in his own mission. He could now observe his rules with more freedom, and perform his exercises of piety to his entire satisfaction. His new pastor writes of him : “ He spent the greater part of his last vacation with me, in Montgomery county, and it was not long before he had secured the profound esteem of all who came in contact with him. He was ever faithful to his religious exercises, although he had many things to distract him, and though every day specious pretexts could have been easily found to dispense with them. He

knew no rest if he had not said his Beads and the Office of the Blessed Virgin, made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and spent some time in reading a pious book, generally the Life of the Blessed Virgin. I had very often to quiet his conscience, when it became impossible or improper to carry out to the letter his director's recommendations. I was obliged to exert the authority I had over him, if I wished him to remain up after nine o'clock. He approached the Sacraments almost as often as at the College, and his preparation was truly admirable. One day, before Communion, he was observed to embrace the crucifix with the ardor of a seraph. During the summer evenings, we were in the habit of sitting

together under the shade of some trees, in front of the house. There, surrounded by all the luxuriance of nature, we often conversed on the necessity of saving our souls, on the dignity, joys, sorrows and dangers of the priesthood. Oh God! how sweet it was to hear that child discourse on these subjects! How small and miserable I felt myself by the side of that pure soul!"

As another instance of the extreme delicacy of his conscience, we may cite the following circumstances.—One day, his vest wanting a button, he asked his mother if she would not sew one on. "Yes," said she, "Father C. has several dozen of them." "They do not belong to us though, Mother," he replied quickly; "we



have no right to take any ; ” and so scrupulous was he about it, that he would not suffer her to put one on his vest, until she had promised that she would tell Father C. of it, as soon as he came home.

Every day disclosed some trait in that angelic soul, that seemed more admirable than the rest; every day deepened the impression he produced upon the minds of those who enjoyed his acquaintance. Since his death, we casually met a gentleman of Montgomery county, who spoke of our young friend with unreserved admiration, lamenting that “so good and lovely a boy should have been called away so soon.”

To conclude what is to be said of his second vacation, we shall present



to the reader the last letter he wrote to his spiritual director :

“ ROCKVILLE, Aug. 30, 1865.

MY VERY DEAR FATHER :— Day before yesterday, I had the happiness of receiving your kind and affectionate letter. I was, however, very sorry to hear that you had had a hemorrhage : I hope it will amount to nothing, as the Doctor says, and I trust that God and our Blessed Mother will spare you to me : for, how could I get along without you ? You, who have taken such care of my soul, and have ever treated me with the tenderness of a most devoted and indulgent father. My mother was very much grieved to hear of your sickness : she says she will pray for you, and hopes she will not be

forgotten by you. As for me, I remember you when saying my Beads and my Little Office. I am doing pretty well with my studies and exercises of piety; and I have done much better still, since I received your kind letter. I rise when the clock strikes *five*. Then I go to the church, say my morning prayers, and make a meditation of a quarter of an hour, or a little more. I perform my other exercises of piety at the proper time during the day, and study for about two hours. I used sometimes, through forgetfulness, to neglect my reading of the New Testament, my particular examen, and sometimes my visit to the Blessed Sacrament. I will do so *no more*. We have no Mass on Sundays, except once a month; and, on that

account, I have not worn the cassock and surplice here. Oh! how I should like to wear the cassock, next year, at the College! . . . As Father C. is away from home a great deal, we have no Mass on some days of the week; when there is any I serve it. I go to Communion during the week, as I cannot go on Sunday. I long for the time when 'Mon Père' and I shall meet again. I thought something of returning to St. Charles' in the beginning of next week; but Father C. wants me to wait and go with him on the second Tuesday of September. What do *you* think of it? I will do as you say. Believe me to be, dear Father,

"Your affectionate child in the

Sacred Heart of Mary,

"JOHN M. COSTELLO."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### His Third Year at College.



COSTELLO was not to complete his third year at the College; but the few months of life that remained to him were destined in the designs of the Divine Providence to give the finishing stroke to his virtues and to crown his merits. His director, who was the superintendent of the sacristies, had always given him every proper encouragement and

had even favored him so far as to give him the highest office in the principal sacristy; yet, he had never been over-indulgent, and, in the hope of forming him by degrees to solid virtue, he had sometimes mingled with these proofs of his affection some very severe trials. Of these, however, none affected John more than his director's apparent displeasure. At the beginning of this scholastic year, the superintendent in concert with the President of the College, removed all the sacristans, or at least, changed them all from one chapel to another, wishing to afford a greater number of the students an opportunity of learning the due performance of this ecclesiastical function, and, at the same time, to guard against the

danger of routine and familiarity to which all are exposed who are occupied a long time in the same functions. This was to be for John a heavier trial than any he had ever undergone. By this change, he would lose the first place, with the honor of having a seat in the Sanctuary, and the privilege which he valued more than any thing else, of serving Mass every day. Nor did his director, when informing him of the change, adopt any precautions by way of making it less keenly felt. Without assigning any reason, he said simply: "This year, John, you will be content with the third chapel." The poor boy uttered no complaint, manifested no dissatisfaction, but from that moment he devoted to his little chapel all the



diligence and care which he had manifested in his former office; nay, his attention and spirit of faith were, if possible, even greater. Could such dispositions proceed from aught else than the most solid virtue?

On the 20th of September, he wrote to his mother: "I am not sacristan of the large chapel, this year; but I have one of the little chapels to take care of. I like my present charge as well as the other, and even better, because I am alone, so that I know just what I have to do. . . . I hope, dear Mother, you are not lonesome; keep up a good heart, for you know *God is good*. I was dreaming of you, the other night: I thought you were dead. If you are sick, or have any trouble, please to tell me. . . ."

His



mother had, in fact, been very “lonesome” since his departure; and, when he heard of it, he endeavored to console her by the following letter, which we will transcribe entire, as it is the last we have from him.

ST. CHARLES' COLLEGE,

*October 18, 1685.*

“MY VERY DEAR AND LOVING MOTHER:—I welcomed your kind letter with true pleasure; I was so glad to hear that you were in good health. As for your lonesomeness, offer it as a sacrifice to our Lord, who is always so good, and who has suffered so much for us. Remember, also, dear Mother, that I am near you, and that will revive your spirits.

As for myself, I am perfectly well so far, and am succeeding very well with my studies. So, every thing goes on finely. There is one thing, however, that I should like very much to have, it is a *cassock*. It would remind me of my vocation, which I hope, with the help of God, never to abandon. This is, at present, my greatest desire, except that of pleasing God. I hope Father R. will let me wear the cassock; but, if he denies me permission, there can be no more said about it for the present. My dear Mother, pray to the Blessed Virgin for me, and tell her my little wish.

“I remain, as ever, your affectionate son in the Sacred Heart of Mary,

“JOHN M. COSTELLO.”

But John was to have a still further trial. Father R. finding in this ardent desire for the cassock, an occasion for putting his youthful penitent's docility to a severer test, received his petition very coldly: "The time has not yet arrived for you to wear the cassock." The poor boy submitted without a murmur, and thought only of becoming more worthy of the coveted favor.

His Spiritual Retreat took place very late this year, as though Divine Providence had willed it to be a more immediate preparation for the summons that was so soon to blight our cherished hopes. His fervor, always so remarkable, assumed on this occasion a solemnity that filled the observer with reverence and awe,

as if he already belonged to heaven. All his unoccupied time was divided between the chapel and his director's room. The one great desire of his soul was perfect purity of heart, and he sought it, where alone it is to be found, with the Author of grace and his minister, pouring forth his soul in prayer to the one, seeking sympathy and counsel from the other. In reality, no one can say what passed during those days of blessing in that pure heart; but the reader may judge how effectually grace had done its work from the following resolutions which were found after his death among his papers.

J. M. J.

RESOLUTIONS OF JOHN M. COSTELLO,

*Taken at the close of the RETREAT of 1865,*

*on ST. CHARLES' DAY, Nov. 4th.*

I, John M. Costello, do make, and with the help of God, the protection of the Blessed Virgin and of all the Saints, do determine to keep the following resolutions :

1. To receive the advice of my director, Rev. L. R., as if they came direct from God himself.

2. Not to look up or around at times or in places of silence.

3. In recreation, not to continue playing at any game, if I find myself getting angry.

4. To suffer all crosses with patience.

5. To do every thing in my power  
“for the greater glory of God.”


6. To have a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Holy Mary, pray for me, a sinner,

JOHN M. COSTELLO.

## CHAPTER IX.

### His Virtues.



WITHOUT claiming for our little work the title of a biography, we have, nevertheless, deemed it most advisable as well as most convenient, to adopt the plan usually followed in such narratives. We shall, therefore, interrupt for awhile the order of events, and enter into a more minute consideration of the virtues which adorned the character of our saintly student, and to which we have incidentally alluded in different



portions of this sketch. Our information has been derived for the most part from his professors and fellow-students, who from the three years' close intimacy which they enjoyed with him, had learned to know and revere his exalted worth.

No virtue shone more conspicuously in the life of John Costello than the virtue of faith; for which reason we shall assign it the first place in this notice. Were any other reason required, it would be amply supplied in the doctrine of the church, that "Faith is the beginning, foundation and root of all our justification."\* Costello had received his faith from his race: the blood that flowed in his veins was Irish blood, and it never

\* Council of Trent.

mantled his cheek because of his religion, save with indignation, when that religion was insulted. We have seen him, even in his tender years, confessing it before its bitter enemies with the utmost energy and enthusiasm. At college, the same principle made him bring to the discharge of his duties a spirit of independence that, at times, provoked comments harsh and hard to bear. He yielded implicit obedience to his director's instructions without the slightest reference to what others might think or say; and, in thus acting, he was prompted, not by contemptuous indifference to their good or bad opinion, but by a lively faith, that caused him to see in his superiors the representatives of Al-

mighty God. His veneration for every thing even remotely connected with religion was unbounded: holy relics, the ceremonies of the Church, the Sacred Scriptures, but above all the ecclesiastical state, were objects of the liveliest interest for him, who desired only God as the "portion of his inheritance and of his cup." "I would a thousand times rather be a priest," said he to one of his professors, "than be President of the United States." Recognizing in every thing the directing hand of Providence, his conversation and writings were continually guarded with such expressions as, "if it be the will of God," "thanks be to God." From this simple faith in the providence of God naturally arose a great con-

fidence in the efficacy of prayer; he not only prayed much himself, but he would never neglect an opportunity of soliciting the prayers of others in his behalf; he was never known to leave his director's presence without: "Pray for me, Father, please." When the association of the Apostleship of Prayer was introduced into the College, he hailed it with all the ardor of his earnest nature, and was among the first to join its ranks. In its pious practices his thirst for prayer was abundantly satisfied, and, being so intimately connected with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, it became his most cherished exercise of piety.

But it was in the chapel, before the altar, and at the holy table that his

strong faith shone most conspicuously; his manner of making a genuflexion or the sign of the cross, would have convinced any one that in performing these acts of religion, he did it, not through mere routine, but with a profound sense of their pious import. One of his young friends, speaking of his Communions, remarks: "I have often watched him as he went to receive the Holy Communion; his air of modesty and devout recollection, and the joy that beamed on his countenance revealed the workings of his soul. All the affections of his heart seemed centred on that delicious food which the infinite love of our God has prepared for his sinful creatures. When he had returned to his place, his humble and devout posture, the composure of

his countenance, the motion of his lips, told us, more than words could have done, of the love with which he entertained his Saviour." The same student speaking of the manner in which he fulfilled his charge in the sacristy, says: "As his joy was so great at being near his Lord's earthly dwelling, can we doubt that his heart was constantly raised in prayer to Heaven, whilst thus passing and re-passing in the sacramental presence." He fulfilled his duties as sacristan with so much earnestness, that he would have spent all his recreation in arranging the altars, making and cutting the altar-bread, and doing a thousand little things of the kind, had he not been required to stop at an earlier moment. "I frequently



found him alone," says one of the professors, "in silent adoration of his Lord and Saviour, when his fellow-students were enjoying themselves at recreation." Sometimes, at night, after he had prepared every thing for the morrow's Mass, thinking himself alone in the dark, he would prostrate himself before the Blessed Sacrament, and devoutly kiss the floor of the church or the steps of the altar.

After the devotion to the Holy Eucharist, none is so much encouraged at St. Charles', as the devotion to Mary. \* The reader can recall the joy with which Costello entered her Sodality, and with what loving piety he adorned her altar during the month of May. Devotion to his "dear Mother," and the love of God,



were with him one and the same thing. "His chief delight during the summer season," says one of his friends, "was to gather the delicate field flowers that grow in such profusion about St. Charles', to adorn the Sanctuary, and the oratory of the Blessed Virgin." "His tender love for this good Mother," remarks another, "was evident in all his conduct and conversation. I have often heard him call her '*ma chère Mère*,' '*notre auguste Mère*;' these and the like expressions, taken from some French hymns that we sang during the month of May, were continually on his lips." "Oh! would that I had a tenth part of his affection for her!" exclaims a third. "I slept in the bed next to his for a whole year, and can

affirm, with perfect confidence, that he never composed himself to sleep without having first recited a few decades of the Rosary." Following a devout practice very popular among the students, he had procured a little statue of the Blessed Virgin, which he placed on his desk in the study hall, that he might remember her and study under her patronage.— Yet, he thought he did not do enough to testify his love and gratitude; and a month before his death, at the end of his last Retreat, he took the special resolution of "always having a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin."

There was another trait of character in Costello, that no one ever failed to remark, who once came in contact with him: this was his unalterable

gayety and cheerfulness. We cannot do better in this connection, than quote the language of a student fully qualified by piety and good sense to pass a judgment in the matter: "There is an opinion, a very false one, prevalent with a great many Christians, that piety consists in continual prayers, a horror for any thing like mirth and laughter, frigid manners, and a mortified and severe countenance: in their view a good student is one who avoids, even in time of recreation, all sign of hilarity; who moves among his companions with a sort of solemn commiseration for their levity, that would be amusing were it not so absurd; in a word, a kind of religious iceberg, cold himself, and freezing all warmth out of

those who approach him. Such piety is repellent; Costello's was not of that cast. When recreation came, he joined his companions at play, always with a pleasant and agreeable manner, took a prominent part in stirring up the inactive, and endeavored to infuse into the more excitable of them the good temper and sweetness he himself possessed. He would occupy himself in this way, until the bell, in which he recognized the voice of God, called him to silence. In this respect he gave us all an example worthy of our imitation."

In order to justify the title we have given our little work, and show how fully the beauty of virtue was exemplified in the life of this amiable youth, we must claim the privilege of introducing still further testi-

mony from his masters and associates. "So gentle, so modest, so humble," says one of the latter, "and withal so full of genial humor and innocent sprightliness, was he, that, from the moment he entered the College, he became a general favorite. In making up the games, he was always among the first to be chosen; and he entered into the spirit of them with all the ardor imaginable." "If he was diligent in his studies," writes another, "recollected and fervent in his religious exercises, he was no less animated and pleasant in his recreations. His countenance beaming with joy, reflected the peace and purity of his soul. To a naturally happy temper, he added mildness and an exalted generosity. He was beloved by

all his fellow-students, whose affection he won by his affability and charity." "I ever found him cheerful and ready, nay, eager to participate in the games of his fellow-students; in fact at play he was second to none among them. I do not remember to have seen him wound the feelings of any one; on the contrary, if he thought he had offended any one, he knew no rest until he had made amends for it; this, his tact and delicacy enabled him to do readily and effectually; indeed, there was no withstanding the hearty, good-humored laugh, that generally accompanied these efforts at conciliation."

Such being the esteem in which his young companions held him, no won-



der that his superiors also should take pleasure in having him with them ; the more so, as he evidently enjoyed being in their company. One of them writes to us thus : “ We have all felt happy in the sunshine of his meekness, his humility, and the amiability of his disposition.” “ I always noticed in Costello,” adds another professor, “ a placid affability of manner remarkable in one so young. He moved among his admiring companions with a composure and cheerfulness, that bespoke the tranquility he enjoyed within. He was kind and courteous to all around him, ready and exact in the discharge of his duties as a student.” Again, an experienced professor, who has grown old in the direction of students and



seminarians, in different countries, assures us that he never met so perfect a character in a youth; adding that if he had to characterize him, he would apply to him those words of Holy Writ: "The beloved of God and man." \* For our own part, we would say that so much amiability, joined to so much virtue, could not but be a special gift from above, and that in him were again verified the words of the Psalmist: *Prævenistum in benedictionibus dulcedinis.*†

Costello's disposition to piety and recollection, arose then, not from any sluggishness of character, but from virtue based upon an inflexible devotion to duty. Naturally, he was

\* Eccles. xiv, 1.

† Thou hast prevented him with blessings of sweetness. Ps. xx, 4.

lively and fond of pleasure, humorous and full of fun; but he knew how to restrain his natural inclinations, within the limits of duty, and even to derive from them an occasion for the practice of virtue. Thus, at play, he was always more anxious to give pleasure to others than to have it himself, patiently waiting their convenience or inclination, ever ready when they were, and always preferring what they preferred. “Who among his fellow-students,” says one of them, “has not been a witness of his willingness to promote the happiness of others, even at the sacrifice of his own time and gratification?”—Frank, honest and impartial himself, he had a horror of anything unfair, that he took no pains to conceal; yet,

no indication of ill-breeding or coarseness was ever to be discovered in him. He treated every one politely. He could enter fully into the spirit of every innocent game, but he never suffered himself to dispute or show the slightest ill-feeling toward any one of his playmates. In recreation time, he watched so carefully over all the movements of his heart, that the least excitement appeared to his delicate conscience a sin of anger; and we have seen him, in his last Retreat, adopt a very severe measure against these faults, as he called them, the resolution "not to continue playing at any game, if he found himself getting angry."

If Costello's manners were irreproachable, his speech was no less

blameless. St. James\* tells us that "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." Judged by this standard of the Apostle, the subject of our sketch rose to a level of virtue seldom attained, even by the most regular Christians. "His conversation," says a student, "edified, whilst it charmed and delighted us." "He preferred," says another, "to talk upon religious topics, but would enter readily into general conversation, provided it concerned something useful." "During the two years that I spent in close companionship with him, he never, to my knowledge, uttered a syllable to the prejudice of any of his fellow-students." "Once I remarked that he suddenly stopped,

\* James, iii, 2.

when on the point of relating some facts to the discredit of a person who had injured him, and whose conduct, otherwise, was not very exemplary.”

“But he possessed another virtue, the rare one of never finding fault with any order emanating from his superiors. He was never heard to censure their actions, or to express dissatisfaction at the strictness of the discipline, the quality of the food, or any one of the thousand little things upon which students often assume the right of passing judgment.”

Generous and loving to all, his sympathies were particularly open to the despised and persecuted; when others shunned them, he would keep them company, even at the risk of sharing the odium attached to them,

and we have seen him shed bitter tears over sorrows that were not his own. He was endowed by nature with the strongest and tenderest affections, witness the great reverence and love he ever entertained for his mother and spiritual father; he acquired, however, and maintained so complete a mastery over them, that he was never accused, nay, not even suspected, of complicity in any of those private friendships, the bane of communities, that give to one alone the interest and affection which are due to all. "He had the feelings of a brother for all his companions," observes a clergyman of the College; "yet, in conformity with reason, as well as with the rule, he frequented most the society of such as were es-



teemed better students, having before his mind the words of the Holy Ghost: '*Qui cum sapientibus graditur, sapiens erit; amicus stultorum similis efficietur.*'"\* The same professor, speaking again on this subject, says: "He was unwilling to associate habitually with those who showed themselves deficient in the ecclesiastical spirit, and never lost an opportunity to manifest his dislike for the maxims of those, who take delight in cavilling at the wholesome restraints of the rule, in criticizing their superiors, and in praising the manners and pleasures of the world."

These last words recall a fact of which it is painful to speak. Gifted

\* *He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise; a friend of fools shall become like to them.* Prov. xiii, 20.

though he was with so many advantages of nature and grace, good and tender-hearted, sprightly and agreeable in conversation, mild and prepossessing in his manners, in short, amiable as he was, John had enemies in the College, from whose envy and ill-will he had much to suffer. The great Apostle's prediction must be fulfilled, even in the most fervent communities: "All that will live piously in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution;"\* and, in the case of our young friend, these trials were, no doubt, permitted that the gem of patience might be added to his already brilliant crown of virtues. Some of the students—thank God, they were very few—looking at his

\* 2 Tim. iii, 12.

conduct from the stand-point of their own irritated feelings, resented his virtuous example as a reproach to their own irregular lives; they regarded with jealous eyes the trust and confidence reposed in him by his superiors; and, as the wicked are always suspicious, they suspected that he obtained these favors by revealing their misconduct.

“I have more than once seen him ill-used by the members of a certain clique,” says a student, “I suppose, *on account of his piety*; I have even seen stones and other things thrown at him, on the walks; but he bore taunts and insults, everything, with the meekness of a true disciple of the Cross.” “Some of his fellow-students,” says another, “annoyed at his

exemplary conduct, which was a reproach to their own laxity, endeavored, by sneers and derision, to dissuade him from keeping his good resolutions; others secretly employed against him the most dishonorable means of persecution. Happily, however, such boys were but a small minority in the house, and Costello found full consolation in the sympathy and affection of a pious community. Under all his trials, he never betrayed the least resentment, but endured all with his usual amiability and patience. I can recall one remarkable instance. One day, in the third year of his college life, as he and I were engaged in conversation, a little 'new-comer' came up to him, and with childish simplicity

cried out: ‘Costello, some of the boys, just now told me that you carried stories of them to the reverend gentlemen.’ To a nature so sensitive and high-toned as his, no accusation could be more intolerable; it burnt into his very soul, and brought the blood rushing to cheek and brow; he recollected himself for an instant, and then calmly answered that no one in the community could justly accuse him of that. This is but one among the many instances I could cite of the mortifications that poor child was compelled to endure.”

In this connection, we deem it an act of justice to vindicate the honor of our young friend, against the imputations cast upon him by the malice of his enemies. He is gone

from amongst us, as we firmly believe, to a land of peace and rest, where nothing earthly can enter in to disturb him; and, though we well know how his humility would have shrunk from any unveiling of his confidence that could elevate him in the eyes of men; yet we know, too, that his love and zeal would not have suffered him to hide anything that might conduce to God's greater glory. We feel at liberty, therefore, on the authority of his director, to mention one or two facts illustrative of his high Christian sense of honor. The first is that this priest, although the most intimate confidant of all his thoughts and troubles, never knew, never even suspected the persecutions of which his young penitent was the



object. Great indeed was his surprise, when made aware of it, after John's death.—Once, in giving an account of his own conduct to his confessor, John repeated a remark of another person, not suspecting its impropriety; but, as the director condemned it in very strong terms, to prevent him from making use of it himself, the boy's delicate conscience took the alarm, and filled with confusion, he cried out: "Oh! Father, have I not committed a great sin? I have lowered my neighbor in your esteem." Certainly he was no mean spy and informer, who thus considered tale-bearing, not only as a breach of honor, but even as a sin against charity and justice.

One thing, without doubt, helped him to bear with patience the trials

he underwent at the hands of men, we mean, the poor opinion he always entertained of himself. We have already heard several of his friends allude with admiration to his humility; another, speaking of it more expressly, says: "There was one trait in his character, which must not be overlooked: it was his humility. He was good, and he knew it not. He looked up for example to those whom he far excelled in the practice of perfection. He would never cease to speak highly of them, and to express his sorrow that he could not be as good as they." These sentiments of humility, whilst they made him believe himself deserving of all the afflictions and persecutions he had to bear, led him so far at times as to make him fear that his spiritual

father would abandon the direction of his conscience, on account of his infidelities.

But his deep conviction of his own unworthiness could not be satisfied with meekly submitting to the chastening hand of his beloved Lord: no, he must do something himself; he must impose on himself other privations and penances. Little did his young companions suspect, when they saw him moving with so much life and cheerfulness, in their midst, that he was wearing upon his arm an iron chain, covered on the inside with sharp points.\*

\* This practice, we know, will appear "foolishness" in the eyes of worldlings, for "the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God." (I Cor. ii, 14.) To such, we can only remark that it has been the common practice of all the Saints, who, after St. Paul, "chastised their bodies, and filled up in their own flesh what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ." (I Cor. ix, 27, and Col. 1, 24.)

A maxim of Blessed Berchmans was: *Mea maxima pœnitentia, vita communis*,\* and a pious author quoted by Benedict XIV., in his book “On the Canonization of the Saints,” says of the rule of St. Francis: “I cannot but look on those who observe it closely, as unbloody martyrs of Christ.” We also read in the Life of St. Simeon Stylites, that the bishops of the Eastern Churches, wishing to try in what spirit he led so extraordinary a life, ordered him, by messengers, to come down from the top of the column upon which he lived for years, secluded from all human intercourse; but, finding him ready at once to obey their command, they bade him remain where he was, con-

\* *My greatest penance is the community life.*

vinced that, in the choice of his life, he was directed by the Spirit of God. Let us, then, put Costello's virtues to the infallible test of the rule.

We have already observed that the discipline at St. Charles' is naturally somewhat severe, its object being to prepare young men for the holy, but austere life of the priest. On the other hand, the rules are not enforced so much by punishment as by persuasion: the discipline is quite paternal, and as the students are supposed to be actuated in their conduct, more by good will than by fear, they are not very closely watched, but oftener "left in the hands of their own counsel."\* This management of the College makes obedience much more

\* Ecclis. xv, 14.

meritorious; so that a young man can receive no higher eulogy than the testimony of his professors and fellow-students as to his constant fidelity to the rules. This evidence is not wanting in favor of Costello.

A student who has already told us that "he spent two years in close companionship with him," bears witness to his exactness in these terms: "Time and again, I have been edified by his scrupulous observance of the rules, and that, too, in matters which, from their seeming unimportance, would not perhaps have otherwise attracted my notice. I never saw him do any thing that was forbidden." This respect for the rule made him anxious to avoid even the slightest occasions of "dissipation;"



hence, the resolution of his last Retreat, "not so much as to look up or around at times and in places of silence." It grew to be a common saying, among the boys, that there was "no use in trying to get a laugh in the study room, out of John or his neighbor." This neighbor was a student of very phlegmatic temperament, who had come, with John, from Montgomery county, and had been accordingly placed next to him in the study hall.

The following remarks, bearing on the same subject, are from one of the professors of the College: "I have had the amplest opportunities for acquainting myself with John Costello's character and disposition: he began the study of Latin under me, and

attended my classes for two years; and I can safely assert that I never remarked in him the least act of deliberate disobedience. His submission was always prompt and cheerful, how painful soever it might be to him; for he had a lively disposition, and was endowed with a very keen sense of the ridiculous. In one of my classes, there were several confirmed triflers; I assigned John a place among the worst of them, that his example might serve to restrain them. How shall I express my admiration at his conduct? His attention to his duties, during the class, was unremitted, notwithstanding constant distractions occasioned by the levity of his companions. One day, however, I reprehended him mildly

for some little act which had escaped him in an unguarded moment, when more than usually tempted by the example of those around him. Soon after the class, he came to me, and promised, with tears in his eyes, that he would strive to give a better example for the future. He kept his word admirably, for during the whole year, he conducted himself like an angel. Nor was this obedience of a servile kind; for his conduct was no less worthy of admiration when out of the sight of his masters, and free from the restraints of the college regulations. His talents, though not of the most brilliant order, were good; and he made up for whatever he lacked in natural endowments, by the energy he brought to the discharge of his duty, and by perse-

vering efforts to reach and maintain an honorable position in his classes. I never saw him lose a moment of time during study hours."

In fine, looking on all his professors as the ministers of God, he obeyed them all with the same respect, whatever their age, position or influence; seeing in all the rules, the expression of the Divine will in his regard, he made no difference, in practice, between those of greater and those of less importance, but endeavored to observe them all to the best of his ability. As an instance of his fervor, in this respect, we may mention that he once made a vow of perfect obedience, revocable at the will of his director; and, if he did not renew it at the expiration of the appointed time, it was only because

it was found to be a new source of trouble to his already too timorous conscience.

But it may be asked: Is all this a faithful and unexaggerated picture of this young man's life? We answer unhesitatingly that it is. We have gathered the materials of it from the recollections of those who were the daily witnesses of his virtues — his professors, his fellow-students, his relatives, the director of his conscience. We have studied him in his letters and conversations; we have beheld him in his intercourse with religious persons and people of the world, with Catholics and Protestants, at home and among strangers, everywhere edifying, everywhere a model of consistent piety. It was

evident to any one that observed him, as one of his companions remarks, that "the aim of his life was perfection;" and this object he followed up with so much energy of purpose, so much fidelity to grace, so much heroic self-devotion, as to merit from the love and veneration of his friends such titles as, "a perfect model for our imitation," "the true type of a virtuous student," "another Aloysius."

He has gone from our midst; but his short stay is still gratefully remembered among us at St. Charles', like the passage of some bright messenger from the abode of the blessed. Well may we conclude in the words of the pious young pastor of Rockville: "Like a blossom of rare promise



plucked from the stem ere it has had time to open into full grace and beauty, our dear John has been called away in the bloom of youth and innocence; but we mourn not as those who have no hope;\* for we feel assured that he has been transplanted to 'fields of light,' where death is unknown and endless summer reigns. He had fulfilled his destiny; he had put the gifts of God to a good use; he had perfected his soul in all virtue, and rendered it acceptable in the eyes of his Maker: we cannot wonder, then, that his pilgrimage has been shortened; he has been taken away like Aloysius, Stanislaus and Berchmans, in the morning of life, 'lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul.' " †


\* 1 The. iv, 12.

† Wisdom iv, 11.

## CHAPTER X.

### His Sickness and Death.

“Thou wert unfit to dwell with clay,  
For sin, too pure: for earth, too bright:  
And Death who called thee hence away,  
Placed on thy brow a gem of light.”



YES, this holy child was  
ripe for heaven; and al-  
though his early demise  
must be bitterly deplored  
as an irreparable loss by  
those who loved him, it should be  
considered as an immeasurable gain  
for him. Had his life been pro-  
longed, his spotless innocence might,

perhaps, have been sullied by the temptations which awaited him in the world; for his was an ardent, enthusiastic, generous and sympathetic soul; and such have need of stronger wills and more faithful correspondence to grace, if they would walk unscathed through the fire of temptation. We may thank God, then, that he was called away before he had even learned in what a wicked world he lived. "The shortest life is the best," says St. Francis de Sales, "if it but lead to life eternal."

Soon after the Retreat of 1866, Costello began to show symptoms of declining health, and about the middle of November he was obliged to interrupt his studies for some time. When, at length, he resumed them, it was

with great difficulty, and he was soon compelled to abandon them for ever. Complaining much of his throat, he was sent to the infirmary, and placed under the care of a physician. Some weeks previous, the typhus fever had made its appearance in the College, and several among the students had been dangerously ill; while two of them had recovered, one, named Michael Blake, was then lying at the point of death. It was consequently deemed advisable to remove Costello and another still younger patient, to a private room. During the two weeks they spent there, the students and professors in turn waited on them. Never shall we forget the edification we received from those two innocent and amiable youths. Their

patience and piety would have excited the admiration of a stoic. The professors took a special delight in making them repeat prayers and spiritual ejaculations, in reading pious books for them, and in conversing with them on religious subjects. As for Costello, though he suffered intensely from his disease, diphtheria, one thing alone afflicted him: his throat being almost entirely closed, he was obliged to take his medicines very frequently, even during the night, and thus could not receive Communion for a long time. This, however, did not prevent him from approaching the Sacrament of Penance every week.

Meanwhile, Edward Bowling, Costello's young companion in suffering,

grew alarmingly worse with the dreadful typhus, and it became necessary to separate them. The death of Blake, which occurred about the last of November, left the infirmary unoccupied, and after it had been carefully cleaned and fumigated, John was removed to it. Here he improved so rapidly as to inspire us all with the hope of his speedy recovery.

One day, about this time, it was announced to him that his mother had arrived at the College. He had often, during his illness, spoken of her in terms which evinced his deeply rooted affection for her, and his longing desire to see her; but when he heard of her arrival, the grateful smile which played upon his pale face, and the light which beamed from his hitherto



languid eyes, spoke his joy more eloquently than any words could have done. The devoted mother had been very uneasy about him for some time; and although John would not allow her to be informed of his sickness, through fear of causing her anxiety, "something told her," she said, "that he was not well." As soon, then, as she learned from himself—for he had already grown strong enough to write—that he had been so sick, she could not be satisfied until she had come to see for herself how he was. She found him sitting up, reading some numbers of the "Ave Maria;" but he was yet very weak, and much emaciated. She remained with him four or five days, during which time she was almost constantly by his side; nor would he

permit her to be long absent from him. That sweet word "Mother" was constantly on his lips; he scarcely addressed her without making use of that endearing title. On one occasion, in particular, when they were alone together, he expressed his love for her in the fondest language. "My son," said she, "I love you ten times more." "Oh! Mother," he replied, "how can you say so?"

"Mother," said he, at another time, "I wish I were at home." "Why so, my son?" "Oh! Mother, my friends at home think they are good, and they are so; but, good as they are, they are not half good enough; and, if I were with them for awhile, I would exhort them to try and be still better, and especially to receive Holy

Communion oftener. If they do not attend faithfully to this, their salvation is not to be hoped for. And you, dear Mother, I beg of you, whatever you do, when you get up, when you go to bed, or even when you wash your dishes, to do it for God's honor and glory; for then your every act will merit a crown of glory in heaven."

On the Sunday before John's death, Mrs. Costello heard Mass at an early hour, that she might keep him company during the High Mass. The community chapel, at that time, was a plain room immediately under the infirmary, so that, from the latter place, one could easily hear the singing of the choir, and follow the different parts of the Holy Sacrifice.—When his mother came in, about the

beginning of High Mass, he requested her to go to the church again, "for," said he, "I wish to assist at this Mass *in spirit*."

The same day, December 10th, young Bowling died. When told of it, John was deeply affected, but made no remark. He continued to grow stronger, notwithstanding the apprehensions of his mother, reawakened by the death which had just occurred. The disorder in his throat no longer existed, and the Doctor declared that he would soon be himself again. She, therefore, took leave of him on the following day, requesting one of the reverend gentlemen to keep her informed of her son's health, and promising to come for him as soon as he could be removed without danger.

But, alas for human hopes ! The very next night John was seized with distressing pains in his stomach ; the physician was at once sent for, and pronounced him suffering from inflammation of the bowels. The poor boy endured this new trial with indescribable sweetness, inquiring whether the little moanings which he uttered for relief, in his worst moments, were sinful, and returning a kind “ thank you ” to every one that rendered him a service, even to the domestic that attended the infirmary. We may say with perfect truth that this terrible disease was to be his purgatory on earth ; indeed, he himself viewed it in that light. After two days of intense agony, his pains abated, but left him with a slight fever, the

nature of which could not at first be ascertained. There was enough, however, to excite our most serious apprehensions; he was now very much changed, feeble to prostration, and, when left alone, raved almost incessantly.

“I was with him all this time,” says one of his companions in the infirmary, “and can bear witness to his spirit of piety. He had always cherished a most tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, but he seemed to love her more now than ever. He was not satisfied till he had her statue, together with a crucifix, placed on a little table by his bed side. The holy names of ‘Jesus, Mary, Joseph,’ were ever on his lips. Sometimes his mind wandered: he would imagine



that his mother was knocking at the door for admittance; and then, he would speak to her in the most endearing terms. At other times, he would address his father, as though he were present with him. Again he would call his uncle Patrick, whom he named, in the words of the song, ‘The fine old Irish Gentleman.’ ”

His delirium served admirably to lay open to us the beauty of his soul, as the habitual practice of virtue had made it—loving, obedient, pious. “I like Mr. V. very much,” he would exclaim. Mr. V. was the infirmarian, and had been obliged to make use of some very painful remedies in John’s case. “I won’t do that,” he would say at another time, “it is

forbidden. Imagining, one day, that somebody was speaking disrespectfully of the Blessed Virgin, he undertook her defence with the greatest vehemence; indeed, in his incoherent and frequently unintelligible ravings, we could often distinguish the names of "Mary," and of "Jesus Christ." As talking exhausted him, his director forbade him to do so, and he stopped immediately; after awhile, however, he would forget the prohibition and begin again; but, when reminded of it by some one present, he would appear very sorry, and say with a mortified air: "O, I forgot."

Even in this semi-conscious state, he never showed the least unwillingness to do as he was told, and always found what was given him "good."

“ Sometimes, when he asked for water, the attendants would give ice, or *vice versâ*; at other times, he would desire to take his medicine, and would be told that it was not yet time; in short, whatever contradiction was offered him, it was always “very well.”

He was, however, perfectly sensible when directly spoken to, even up to his last moments. “One day,” says a professor of the College, “I said to him: ‘John, why do you wish to become a priest? would you not prefer to be a physician, or a lawyer, or a rich merchant, so that you could enjoy the comforts and pleasures of the world?’ He looked at me with astonishment: ‘O! no, no,’ he answered; ‘I wish to become a

priest for the salvation of my own soul, and for that of others. I care not for the riches of the world, I look to eternity.' Another time, he said to me: 'Father, what do you think? I had an opportunity of going to a commercial college, my friends offered to defray my expenses; but I refused to go. Did I not do right?' Then looking up into my face with his usual placid smile, he said: 'Now, I am on a bed of sickness, perhaps on my death-bed; am I not ten times better and happier here, than I would be in the world? Now, I hope, I am well prepared to die, if it be the will of God.' "

We may here mention a little incident of his sickness, which was related to us by the prefect of the Sodality.

“During his last illness, I had an opportunity of witnessing Costello’s fidelity as a sodalist. For some reason or other, the proper officer neglected to bring him the ticket assigning the monthly patron, and, on my first visit to the infirmary, he mentioned the fact to me, requesting me to see to it. I promised to do so; and, the next time I saw him, he said that he had not yet received his ticket. I then brought it to him myself, when he received and read it with eagerness and joy. Such was the devotion this dutiful child cherished towards the Mother of God. With what love and confidence, then, must not Mary have inspired her faithful servant in his last moments!”

On Friday, a marked change came over Costello; the Doctor declared his case one of typhus fever, and said there was no hope of saving him. His confessor was sent for to inform him of it, and to administer the last Sacraments. "After the ceremony," says his companion in the infirmary, "I went to his bed; he lay in calm contemplation, and I asked him how he felt; he answered: 'O, I feel pretty well,' adding that he had just received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Fearing that he would give way to despondency, I tried to rouse him, telling him that he must not lose courage, but rather have great confidence, for this Sacrament very often restored bodily health to the sick. He quietly answered that he



did not fear death; 'for,' said he, 'I am perfectly resigned to die, if it be the will of God. Moreover, I may never again be better prepared than I am at this moment. Come what may, I am perfectly resigned to the will of the Lord.'

"From that time, I observed that he scarcely mentioned the name of any of his family, even in his ravings. The name of his confessor, Rev. Mr. R., was now the one most frequently on his lips. He would often look around the room, and ask if 'Father R.' was there; and when answered in the negative, his countenance would fall, and he would sink back on his pillow with a low moan. Once particularly, he seemed more anxious than usual, and kept asking contin-

ually if class was over yet: 'Father R.,' it appears, had promised to come and sit with him after class; and, as he did not come immediately, John grew so restless that I went for him. As soon as he came the poor boy was satisfied.

"I remember another incident which occurred on the day of his death. He had been exceedingly restless all day, so that it was almost impossible to prevent him from getting out of bed, as he fancied that the one in which he was lying was not his own. After all other means had failed, I said to him: 'John, my dear, Father R. will be displeased with you, if he should hear that you do not keep quiet, as he commanded you.' He looked up wildly into my face and said: 'Did

Father R. say that I must keep still? Well, if he said so, I will try.' "

The fever spread rapidly, and with increasing malignancy, causing the greatest consternation in the house. The day of Costello's death, the directors of the College finding all human remedies powerless to stay the progress of the terrible malady, called on the community to unite in a more special manner to obtain that favor from Heaven. It was determined, therefore, that all the Masses said in the house on the following day, should be offered for Costello's recovery and the abatement of the plague; the students were also requested to make a general Communion with the same intentions. But it was beyond the adorable purposes

of God in this case, to effect a miracle; the dying boy was not to look upon the morrow's sun.

“Noon came and passed,” continues the friend we have just quoted; “John was sinking rapidly. Large dark spots appeared upon his face and forehead; his eyes were sunken in their sockets, and already veiled with the lustreless film of death; everything, in a word, indicated approaching dissolution. Towards evening, he became calmer; his lips moved in prayer, and frequently he prayed aloud.” At half-past six, he had grown quite cold and appeared to suffer greatly. After lying for some time in this state, he suddenly raised his eyes towards heaven, and exclaimed: “There is now no hope!”

His confessor presented him a crucifix, and he kissed the image of the Saviour with great devotion. "I love Him," he said, "but, I do not like this," pointing to the skull on the foot of the crucifix. "Why, my child," asked the priest. "Because," said he, "I dread judgment: I have been so wicked that I dread to appear before God!" The priest suggested to him motives of confidence: "But you have had good will, my dear child; and, no doubt, you have it yet; and, you know, 'peace on earth to men of good will.'" "Yes, Father," said he, and taking the crucifix once more, he kissed the image of death also.

At a quarter past seven, the "Angelus" rang, and his lips were seen

to move as if reciting the prayers. He still preserved his consciousness, and observed every thing that occurred in the room, looking his thanks for the little attentions paid him, in a way that was deeply affecting.—From time to time, he would ejaculate some little petition, that he had learned during his sickness, or that had been familiar to him from his most tender years. Such, for instance, as :

“O, Sweetest Heart of Jesus, I implore  
That I may love thee ever more and more.”

“Sweet Heart of Mary,  
My salvation be ;”

or again :

“Jesus, Joseph and Mary,  
May I die in your company.”



At nine o'clock the final struggle began. His confessor gave him the last absolution, and the indulgence *in articulo mortis*. A clergyman present proposed to invest him with the "five scapulars," which he had lately received the faculty of conferring.— John already wore the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel; but there were precious indulgences attached to the wearing of the other four, and he had often expressed a desire to receive them. His confessor, therefore, asked him whether he still wished to receive the five "scapulars." "Yes," said he; but he uttered the word so feebly that the priest was unwilling to proceed, thinking that, perhaps, he had not been understood;

he accordingly repeated the question. "Yes," uttered with all his strength, was the last word of John Costello this side of the grave. Several of the professors were then gathered about his bed. Rev. Mr. D. began to recite the prayers for the dying in a voice that told his grief; the others, no less deeply moved, made the appropriate responses, whilst his confessor continued to suggest thoughts of piety and consolation, acts of faith, hope and love, often repeating for him the sacred names of "Jesus, Mary, Joseph," bidding him dwell on them and repeat them in his heart. Before the prayers of the Church were ended, the seal was set upon Costello's life and labors,


and his pure spirit doubly sanctified by virtue and suffering, threw off the shackles that bound it to the earth, and winged its flight to the realms of endless bliss. “*Moriatur anima mea morte justorum, et fiant novissima mea horum similia.*” \*

\* *Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like theirs.* Num. xxiii, 10.



## CHAPTER XI.

### His Funeral and Grave.

HUS died John M. Costello, at half-past nine o'clock, on the evening of December 16th, 1865. It was Saturday, the day of the week which the Church has consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, and it seemed to the eye of faith that, even in this trifling circumstance, the finger of God was working in favor of his servant. After the prayer *Subvenite Angeli*, the corpse was car-

ried to a neighboring room, washed and decently laid out. His death had been accompanied by no very violent convulsions; yet his features were, at first, much altered; gradually, however, they resumed their natural expression of sweetness and tranquility, whilst his limbs remained remarkably flexible.

As a precaution against contagion, it was proposed to bury the body immediately, and preparations had been made with that view, when Mrs. Costello arrived at the College. The poor mother, having heard that her boy had received the last Sacraments, and that there was no longer any hope of his recovery, became almost wild. She hired a conveyance, took a friend with her as guide, and thus

made her way to St. Charles' through the cold and darkness of a winter's night, across the country, and by roads rendered nearly impassable by deep drifts of snow. But who shall describe the agony of that desolate widow, when she found that "her only child, her darling hope," was no more? We confess our utter inability to do justice to that harrowing scene: those, however, who witnessed it, will ever remember the disconsolate mother with the same tender interest that attaches to her lamented son. Never was grief more bitter, never had mother greater cause for grief.

The professors of St. Charles' would have wished to lay their beloved pupil's mortal remains in their own lit-



tle cemetery ; but Mrs. Costello was bent upon taking them home to Schenectady, where she had prepared a last resting-place for him and for herself beside her deceased husband and child. Thankful for all that had been done, she had yet one favor to beg : “ John, during his life, had so ardently desired to wear the cassock, as a member of the Sodality ; could he not be permitted to have it, now that he was dead ? ” The professors readily consented to afford the bereaved widow that consolation, and John was dressed in cassock and surplice, the same that he had worn in vacation time, to the delight of his fond mother and admiring friends.

Early the next morning the body was carried to the chapel, where John

had arranged the bier several times during the preceding year for others, and where he himself was now to receive the last solemn rites of religion. High Mass was there celebrated for the peaceful repose of his soul; and, immediately after, the funeral cortege set out, the community accompanying the hearse with a mournful chant as far as the high road.

We cannot enter into all the particulars of the journey, but will only say that, owing to certain mishaps on the way, John's remains did not reach Schenectady until the following Wednesday. A telegraphic dispatch had already conveyed the sad news to his friends; and, the coffin having been opened, and the body exposed to view, people of all ages and condi-

tions, of every religious denomination, hastened, with the afflicted family, to look once more upon the face of him, who but a few months before, had been their joy and edification. There was the same calm and gentle countenance; the features much changed at the time of his death, had now resumed all the beauty and freshness of youth. "He looked astonishingly well," writes an uncle of his, "notwithstanding the long journey and the mishaps incident thereto; the dress was by no means disordered, nor was there the slightest offensive odor about the body." This was, indeed, very remarkable, as John had been troubled with frequent and prolonged bleeding at the nose during his last illness, and, after his death,

had discharged very freely from the mouth and nostrils; yet, five days later, notwithstanding the shaking of the cars during a long journey, no change was perceptible.

On Thursday morning, the Holy Sacrifice was again offered for his everlasting peace; and, at two o'clock in the afternoon, his remains were escorted to the church by a large concourse of friends, though the weather was most inclement. After reading the funeral service, the Rev. pastor made a few appropriate and touching remarks; and the body of our beloved boy was then conveyed to its place of rest.

We would willingly reproduce here the many beautiful tributes of love and veneration paid to the memory

of this amiable and pious youth; but, to our regret, they have not been preserved. We shall content ourselves, therefore, with the obituary notice that appeared in the "Catholic Mirror" of Baltimore, and in several papers in the North:

"Died at St. Charles' College, Md., in his nineteenth year, John M. Costello, one of its most pious and most regretted students. Born in Schenectady, New York, he was gifted with an uncommon amiability of character, and an unalterable gayety, which made him dear to all who knew him. But during the two years and a half that he spent in the College, Divine grace wonderfully developed and elevated these natural dispositions. — Open and candid as a child, he never

displayed any sentiment contrary to those of an accomplished seminarian. Equally amiable towards his masters and companions, he knew how to reconcile his duties towards all; and it would be difficult to determine what was most admirable in him, his tender piety to God, his cordial charity to his companions, or his unfailing obedience to his superiors. In this last particular, he has already obtained from his fellow-students the most flattering testimonies; and these, all his teachers are happy to confirm, in declaring loudly that they never, in the course of his seminary life, saw him do anything against the rules of the institution, or anything that could merit a reproach from them. Such a child was ripe for heaven. After



four weeks of sickness, his feeble constitution yielded, last Saturday, 16th instant, to a complication of diseases. But God, who never allows himself to be conquered in generosity, rewarded his piety by lavishing on him, during his life, on his death-bed, but especially in his last moments, all the graces and consolations of religion. All look up to him as a model and protector in heaven, and we willingly apply to him, with one of his professors, these words of the Holy Scriptures: 'The beloved of God and men, whose memory is in benediction.'—(Ecclus. xlv, 1.) R. I. P."

This high testimony of his virtues was received by all John's acquaintances as the expression of their own sentiments. Thus, a young man who

had shortly before left St. Charles', wrote to one of the professors: "The character of John Costello, as published in the 'Mirror,' is perfect in every particular; not a syllable is exaggerated. I have always revered him as a saintly boy, and I am sure he is in heaven."

This was not to be the end of our trials at St. Charles': three other youthful students, John A. Bogue, D. Delaney and J. Saxton, followed Costello to the grave; and we willingly avail ourselves of this opportunity to pay our homage to the memory of these excellent youths. Such was the dismay occasioned in the house by the spread of the fever, that it became impossible to attend any longer to study; it was, there-

fore, determined to close the College until the danger should pass away. Studies were accordingly suspended, and the community was dispersed for some months.\* At length, however, the mercy of God relieved us from the fatal scourge, and permitted us to resume our work with even more favorable prospects of success than

\* Taking advantage of the absence of the students, the Faculty of the College proceeded to complete the improvements already commenced, for promoting the greater health and comfort of the Community. In the meantime, the following report, made by several eminent physicians who had been called to examine into the sanitary condition of the College, was published for general information.

BALTIMORE, January 16, 1866.

TO VERY REV. J. P. DUBREUL, D. D.,

*Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice and*

*Principal of the Trustees of St. Charles' College; and*

REV. O. L. JENKINS, A. M.,

*President of St. Charles' College.*

GENTLEMEN:—The undersigned Physicians having, at your request, visited St. Charles' College on the 13th inst., and made a thorough examination of the premises; and having duly investigated the origin and nature of the endemic disease which recently appeared in the Institution, beg leave to report:

before. In His judgments as in His mercies praised for ever be His holy name.

We will terminate our brief narrative with a few lines from the pen of one who has already furnished us with many interesting particulars. "The Catholic Cemetery of Schenectady is situated on an elevated tract of land overlooking the city from the south-east. It is very neatly laid out, and contains some very hand-

1. That the disease in question, seen by three of the undersigned, was Typus Fever.

2. That the evidence is positive that the fever did not originate in the College, but was introduced into it by a student who had been attacked elsewhere.

3. That it will be entirely safe for the former inmates to return to St. Charles' College, on the 1st, March, proximo, the intervening time being necessary for again thoroughly preparing the house for their reception, it having been recently completely dismantled.

F. E. CHATARD, M. D.

WM. E. A. AIKEN, M. D., L. L. D.

THOS. B. OWINGS, M. D.

J. A. DOYLE, M. D.

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSTON, M. D.

some monuments. In the north-east end is a large plat, measuring about eight feet by twenty, surrounded by ten marble posts, with a heavy black chain suspended between every two. *There* is Costello's grave. His father is buried in the middle of the lot, his little brother on the right and John lies on the left, his head towards the west. His tomb bears evidence that he has left behind him loving friends to cherish his memory: it is edged with bright green boxwood; flowers are scattered about in abundant profusion; at his feet stands a beautiful rose-tree, meet emblem of his charity and loveliness; from his breast springs up a knot of fragrant blue violets, a symbol of his faithfulness and humility. This last was not

planted by any human hand, and I cannot consent to attribute its presence on that grave to chance. At his head rises a fair white stone, bearing the following inscription:

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS.



J H S

*In memory of*

JOHN M. COSTELLO,

Who died Dec. 16, 1865,

At St. Charles' College, Ellicott's  
Mills, Md.,

Aged 19 yrs., 3 ms., and 12 days.

*Requiescat in pace. Amen.*



Yes, most amiable and virtuous youth, *mayst thou rest in peace!* Sweet be thy slumber; lightly may the turf rest upon thy place of rest; long may the memory of thy exemplary life remain fresh and green in the hearts of thy former companions: and, on the last day, when time shall be no more, and eternity's endless ages are about to begin, may we meet thee again, robed in light, at the right hand of Him to whose service thou didst consecrate thy youthful days, and who, we trust, pleased with thy sacrifice, summoned thee to Himself, ere thy path hath been shadowed by the trials, sorrows and dangers, inseparable from the life of a faithful priest.

The End.





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